

OPERA SEATING PLAN DEFENDED

Mr W. Wheatland, assistant to Mr Joern Utzon, the Sydney Opera House designer, last night described claims that seat spacing was unsatisfactory and would require adjustment as a lot of nonsense.

"The latest plans showing proposed spacing had been approved by European standards," he said.

"No comparable theatres have gone up in Sydney in recent years. Mr Utzon wasn't interested in theatre plans of 30 years ago, and neither am I."

SERIOUS

Mr Wheatland said the announcement by the NSW Minister for Public Works, Mr Davis Hughes, of serious seating deficiencies resulted from the fact that his panel of architects was incapable of following Mr Utzon's plans.

The latest plans made available to Mr Hughes provided for approximately 2700 seats, Mr Wheatland said.

In his criticism of the plans yesterday Mr Hughes said Mr Utzon had always claimed that the major hall would accommodate 2800 seats, but according to his plans it would take only 1800.

Row spacing proposed was 2 feet 5 inches in the gallery with a seat width of 1 foot 8 inches, but acoustic consultants who visited Sydney recently said this was unsatisfactory and a survey of Sydney theatres confirmed this.

TH:
owers.

DARWIN:
Mainly fine.