



**Tenant & Site Development Committee**  
**Wednesday 16 May at 12.30 pm, Linen Room, Convent Building**

## **Minutes**

Attendees: Charlotte Allen (ACF Board/TSDC Chair); Mike Smith (ACF Board); Patricia O'Donnell (ACF Board); Sally Romanes (ACF Board); Anthony Cullen (ACF Board and Acting CEO Wurundjeri); Liz Short (C1.40); Yvonne Patton (C2.02); Charlie Sublet (C2.48); Niki Pidd (C2.18); Jo Saunders (C2.28); Matthew Quick (C2.33); Sal Cooper (C2.23); Jennifer West (Sophia Mundi Steiner School); Rick Matear (C2.12); Ilona Topolcsanyi (MG2); John Di Natale (ACF COO); Alex Landragin (C2.44); Rema O'Neill (C1.25); Robyn De Vries (C2.26)

Apologies: Helen Punton (MF5); Libby Ward-Christie and Victoria Marles (ACF Board); Jo Kennedy (C1.48); Tony Wilson (C2.41); Kate Ryan (C2.38); Jen Storer (C2.54); David Simpson (C2..27); Victoria Ryle (C1.24)

**1. Minutes from 18 November 2011 meeting**

Accepted (SR) seconded (JW)

**2. Business Plan for the next five years**

This is finalised and, as required, submitted to State Government. The Business Plan will be posted on ACF website sometime during the week beginning 21 May. Hardcopies will be available at the ACF office.

**3. Vision for Sacred Heart**

Tenant 'dream' sessions held fortnight ago with external stakeholders invited to two sessions. Further development of site is dependent on funding so sessions were for feedback on a "what would you like to see activated in these spaces if money was there" basis.

**4. Update on Code of Conduct (CoC)**

Mike Smith reported that a code of conduct has been formalised as part of ACF's staff contracts and have been signed by staff members.

There was a discussion around the difficulty of implementing a suitable tenant code of conduct due to the inability of formalising this within a lease structure. As well, difficulties of what behaviours could or should be covered; how to manage and/or address 'breaches' and action those breaches are issues at this stage too complex to resolve.

Feedback was sought from members re advice on how the best way of addressing a CoC could be formulated. Suggestions were made regarding governance and a system of communication including a grievance/complaints process and establishing a step-by-step process with a timeline. This led to an agreement that such a process would be helpful and for this process to include mediation by an external party.

The Chair requested tenants to provide any suggested models to be considered. The ACF will also come back to the group with some suggestions.

#### **5. Steiner School update (Jennifer West, Principal SMSS)**

School build is underway with classrooms to be completed in time for Term 3. Government funding for Mercator annexe refurbishment will be received shortly so that laboratory can be completed as soon as possible. A public community opening followed by a formal (ministerial) invited opening will occur and will be communicated to the tenant community when dates are confirmed.

#### **6. Other business**

Robyn De Vries (requested amendment of noted Agenda item re House of Refreshment lease) asking instead the discussion be around "place". She asked for improved communication/s between tenants and ACF management saying there was a "slipping back to distrust" between the tenants and ACF.

A discussion followed which included comments from some tenants expressing frustrations and disappointment about the relationship between tenants and ACF.

The issue of the termination of HoR lease was raised and was discussed at some length. These discussions included information about representation by two tenants proposing ACF to consider an extension of the HoR lease which was collectively put to Steve Miller in person by all three. It was noted that the operator did not want to pursue that offer. Mike Smith said the ACF tried for a long time to assist HoR so that he could remain on site. The ACF decided it could not discuss the issue in detail in public or with tenants because of the precedent it would set for privacy protection for all tenants. It was the operator who made the failure to pay rent a public issue, not the ACF. Some tenants remarked on the importance of the House of Refreshment to the

Convent building's culture. And some tenants said the ACF had been fair and that there was an understanding why the lease had been terminated.

General discussion ensued about the need and importance of a space/centre for connection, collaboration and the coming together of tenants. The ACF has said that it will advertise via an EOI as soon as possible for a tenant for the vacant space and has asked tenants for any suggestions that could be considered in the selection criteria.

Mike Smith said the ACF Board's priority over the first six years was to establish the financial viability of the site and that the Convent is in a transition period with the new focus to be on developing the Convent's arts and community culture and looking to the future. It was also noted that the Convent has to remain financially self-sustaining as a condition of the Deed from the Government. The ACF gets no government funding, has to pay rates and land tax and that running a 'private' public open space has huge pressures, including enormous maintenance costs. All these factors contributed to pressure on rents.

A discussion around rental rates and levels followed with a number of tenants on level 2 of the Convent building saying the rents are too high and inequitable. There was also discussion about the level and number of amenities offered for artists. It was suggested that tenants could formulate a 'wish list', proposing tenant needs, or alternative use of spaces etc

Disability access was discussed. The long standing ACF promise of making the Convent's entry doors more user friendly and accessible will be completed by June.

The need for clarity about who to speak with in the ACF re tenant issues is needed.

Towards the end of the meeting a letter was given to the ACF Board on behalf of a number of tenants with the announcement that an association of tenants has been formed. *(NOTE: Board members said later they would send a response to all 17 names at the foot of the letter)*

Given many of the discussions it was agreed that the Communications Charter that was developed by the Communications working party made up of tenants and Board will be attached to the draft TSDC minutes and distributed to the tenant community.

**Meeting closed at 2.05pm**

*NEXT TSDC MEETING: THURSDAY 16 AUGUST (Venue tbc)*