

## Convent tenants' communication survey Report to tenants - October 2010

Thank you to everyone who responded to the survey. We ran the survey twice as some of you said you didn't see it the first time and out of 176 tenants in the Convent community, 42 of you responded in total.

The purpose of the survey was to gather your views and suggestions about existing channels used to communicate with and between the Convent community and the ACF.

This report details common responses as well as action that has been committed to by the Convent Board, the ACF and/or members of the tenant community.

If you'd like to see a copy of the complete results (presented in Powerpoint) they are available in electronic form from the ACF. Please email Mirella Zandegu at [info@abbotsfordconvent.com.au](mailto:info@abbotsfordconvent.com.au) for a copy.

The questions asked respondents to rate the effectiveness of channels, where 1 was very low and 10 was very high. The rating figures given are the averages for all respondents who answered a particular question. There was then an opportunity to comment further and to make recommendations and suggestions for improvement on each channel. Summarised feedback and 'key findings' on each channel is presented here with a table noting tenants' suggestions for improvement and actions.

### Key findings

#### 1. Weekly tenants' email

Forty-one respondents felt the weekly email should be continued and 38 felt it should stay weekly. On average, it was rated 7.5 out of 10 for effectiveness and was highly valued by the tenant community.

#### 2. Regular tenants' meeting

The effectiveness of the meetings was rated at 5.8 – which gives room for improvement. Despite this, 34 of the 42 respondents felt the meetings should continue, with 25 people feeling they should remain as monthly. Some of the issues raised included requests for variable times as those scheduled were not always convenient and a general desire for greater input and involvement from the tenant community. There were also a number of respondents who are unable to attend meetings due to existing work commitments.

#### 3. Abbotsford Convent website

The website was rated 6.8 for effectiveness, however a significant number of tenants commented that although they rated it as a good website, they never use it. Suggestions for improvement are included in the table at the end of this report.

#### **4. The Muse**

The Muse is distributed to audiences outside the tenant community, so is not a 'tenant only' communication channel. It was rated 6 out of 10 for effectiveness as a communication channel with tenants and 26 out of 29 tenant respondents felt it should continue.

#### **5. Facebook page**

This was rated very poorly for effectiveness at 3.7 out of 10. Only 19 respondents commented on whether it should be continued and of these 16 said it should. Many said they weren't even aware it existed and if they were, felt that it was a tool better suited to communication with external audiences as it's available for anyone to read.

#### **6. Gate 1 noticeboard**

This was rated at 4.8 for effectiveness, which indicates room for improvement. Thirty-two out of all 42 respondents felt it should continue with the overall view that it should be tidied up, made to look more professional and always kept up to date. The majority of tenants felt it was important to have a place where visitors are updated when they arrive at the Convent.

#### **7. Email, phone, face-to-face contact with the Convent office**

Rated 8.25 for effectiveness – which indicated tenants are very happy with this. A great deal of positive support for the office was expressed, with an overwhelming majority of favourable comments on politeness, helpfulness and timely responsiveness of the office staff. Other tenants felt the staff were professional, enthusiastic and a pleasure to deal with. All 42 respondents answered this question and out of these, two felt strongly that their experience of the office was negative, lacking a feeling of trust and at times a change in decisions made, resulting in frustration. Others commented that the office can be hard to find, especially for visitors to the site.

#### **8. Public noticeboard**

Rated 3.7 for effectiveness. Out of the 25 people who answered this question, 18 thought it should continue and 7 didn't think so. Those who thought it should felt it should be updated more regularly, possibly relocated to a more visible and accessible location and also felt it would be a good location for tenant flyers and information. There did seem to be some confusion as to whether this was just for tenants or for tenants and visitors.

#### **9. Site co-ordinators**

The site co-ordinators received an effectiveness rating of 7.5, with 17 of the 26 people who answered the question feeling the 'system' of site co-ordinators could be improved. Some of the issues raised are being dealt with by the Tenancy Working Party. Others were not aware that the site co-ordinators had a 'communication role' outside events, whilst some respondents were simply unclear about their role and would like further information.

#### **10. Printed material**

Rated 7.9 on average for effectiveness with 29 out of 33 tenants feeling it should continue. People felt it was very effective for visitors, but also that the graphic design should be an example of excellence as there are graphic designers and visual artists based on site. Some felt there could be stronger corporate branding and more consistent marketing messages. Others would like to see the same material also available online to minimise the environmental impact.

### **11. Site signage**

This was rated 5 out of 10 for effectiveness and received the most comments from tenants. In summary, the main points made were: overwhelmingly people felt more (detailed and conspicuous) signage is needed, updated regularly for changing tenants, put in the right places including more and better internal signage and signage should be made of good quality materials.

### **12. Guided site tours**

The guided tours - conducted by volunteers - received an overwhelmingly positive response with nearly all respondents rating their effectiveness and value very highly (8-10 on scale). There were requests for further tenant tours and the suggestion of a 'self guided' tour that could be played, for example, on an ipod. Others felt the tour could be further reaching to include the school and the artists' and writers' work spaces.

### **13. Meeting points (eg Steve's, C3, Community Store)**

Most people enjoy these places as social venues and felt they should be kept as social venues. They were rated 7.8 for communication effectiveness. Whilst some people suggested they provide an opportunity to make information available in the form of flyers or even a noticeboard located nearby, the majority of respondents felt they should not be taken over by formal communication activities.

### **14. News media communications**

Obviously this is not a direct form of communication with tenants, however at the time the survey was conducted, there was considerable news coverage of issues raised by some Convent tenants. For other tenants, this was the first they had heard of these issues. It was rated 4.8 as an effective way of communicating with tenants with most seeing it as an inappropriate and unreliable way to communicate.

### **15. Biggest communication issue on the site**

There were a large number of comments and suggested improvements in this last question of the survey. These included a widespread feeling that tenants would like a culture of inclusion to be fostered between the Board, the ACF and the tenant community. Some felt communication was just fine the way it is, with the right amount in the right ways on the right topics. Others wanted to experience a greater sense of engagement with the running of the Convent, whilst a further significant number expressed anger or annoyance that they had been 'misrepresented' by a small number of tenants in recent press coverage. A number felt there should be greater tenant representation on the Board or a representative tenant group that is responsible for communication within the tenant community. The last section of the accompanying table includes further suggestions.

#### **And on a positive note, a quote from a long-standing tenant:**

*"I have been a tenant from the beginning and . . . I am delighted with the blossoming of the site into a magnificent arts, wellbeing and education precinct."*

## Suggestions from the survey and actions

Suggestions from survey	Action	Timeline	Comments
<b>1. Weekly tenants email</b>			
Include minutes of tenant working groups; more tenant news and profiles; Alternatively, some saw a need for briefer amounts of information.	Review in line with plans for pilot of social media platform and upgrades to current website (ref. 3 below).	End November 2010	
Alter the format so that it begins with a 'summary' of contents and if technology allows, a 'click – go to' on function and 'return to top' function.	Seek expertise to determine IT capacity for suggested improvements.	End November 2010	If current IT does not have capacity for proposed changes, funding bid for 2011/12.
<b>2. Regular tenants' meeting</b>			
More tenants attending the meetings. This will have to be at the discretion of individual tenants.	If there are any further suggestions as to how this might be achieved, please tell the ACF.		
Participating tenants could have an opt-in sharing of emails to communicate the agenda and minutes via their own systems.	Invite, via email, all tenants to opt-in to share their email address.	Mid November 2010	
To alleviate the feeling that the meetings are too ACF-centric, the role of Chair and function of minute-taking should rotate on a 12 monthly order.	Trial call-out for volunteer for tenant Chair and minute-taker for next meeting.	End October 2010	
Follow up minutes; run additional sessions on e.g. skills development	Continue to follow up on business arising from previous minutes. Invite tenants' contributions for future skills development sessions.	Ongoing. Next meeting.	
<b>3. Abbotsford Convent website</b>			
Introduce interactivity, music and animation; more links and a news page linked with facebook and twitter; a tenants' login section where tenants could post things like jobs, studios, exhibitions/performances; a tenants calendar and a blogspot and/or online discussion forum where tenants can comment; a map that tenants could annotate or digitally mark the with arrows etc to send to new people coming to the site.	Add a section called "Governance" which includes the title deed, master plan, business plan, tenancy vision, precinct rules, minutes from tenant meetings and news.  Communication working party is looking at	End November 2010  Begin website	The cost associated with

	<p>online platforms that could allow tenants to share information in a variety of ways eg micro-blogging, commenting on documents (such as policies or minutes), contributing to a calendar of events, etc.</p> <p>The working party is currently considering Yammer and Socialtext and plans to pilot one of these options with the tenant community over the next month.</p>	<p>review July 2011</p> <p>Tenant representatives asked to recommend platforms for a pilot by December 2010</p>	<p>back-end restructures to the existing website will need to be allocated in the 2011/12 financial year.</p>
<b>4. The Muse</b>			
<p>Maybe a working group with tenants help to produce it</p> <p>Maybe topical articles and regular artist profiles</p> <p>Opinion pieces by tenants or a 'letter to the editor'</p> <p>Sort out the technical hitches with email</p>	<p>Activate a tenant-written column that is devised, written and delivered by a tenant editorial team.</p> <p>Activate a 'have your say' column where subscribers can contribute letters to the editor.</p> <p>Activate a subscribers drive amongst the tenant community.</p>	<p>The ACF will put a call out for expressions of interest in forming an editorial team by end November 2010, with the outcomes of these actions delivered in the February 2011 Muse and ongoing.</p>	
<b>5. Facebook page</b>			
<p>More interesting content; regular topic posts including photos of events, markets and exhibitions; more seeding with comments to stimulate conversation.</p>	<p>The ACF will need to examine increasing resources for all social media in the context of other ACF activities.</p>	<p>Pending increased revenue.</p>	<p>Expenditure for additional staff will not be available in the immediate future however, it can be included in the next five year business plan as a</p>

			desired outcome.
<b>6. Gate 1 noticeboard</b>			
<p>Totally redesign it as part of the new signage strategy. Could be much slicker. Give a regular update for visitors about what is on that day/week/month and keep it regularly updated and tidy. Ideally refresh daily.</p> <p>A map/directory of the site with a paper version you can take if wanted.</p>	<p>A site-wide signage project is underway. Refer separate signage overview.</p> <p>Discussion has begun to produce a map and directory that is available for visitors from several points over the site.</p>	<p>Refer separate signage overview</p> <p>Outcome desired by end 2010</p>	Refer separate signage overview
Maybe a digital screen with editable text – or even a chalk board	A site-wide signage project is underway. Refer separate signage overview	Refer separate signage overview	Refer separate signage overview
<b>7. Email, phone, face-to-face contact with the Convent office</b>			
<p>More regular availability of staff. Pictures of the Convent office staff with a bio on the website would be helpful. Office staff could walk around more and talk to tenants</p>	The ACF is creating a satellite office in the ground floor on the Convent building where the Tenant Liaison Coordinator and Venue and Events Manager will be based.	Telephone and internet cabling and administrative systems are currently being installed. That office will be operational in November 2010.	
<b>8. Public noticeboard</b>			
<p>Make it bigger and more obvious. Take out of date notices down. Place it somewhere more accessible – for example the Convent Community Store. Can tenants put up posters and flyers here? Each building should have its own noticeboard and maintain</p>	The ACF will discuss this idea with Cameron and move to action according to his response.	End November 2010.	

their own promotional material.			
Clarify whether this is for tenants only or tenants and visitors Include a general events flyer with a precinct map on the reverse.	Note: the provision of the current public noticeboard was as a response to the request of tenants. At that time, it was agreed that the noticeboard is for use by all.	End November 2010	
<b>9. Site co-ordinators</b>			
If they clean the toilets, this system could be improved. For example information on when they are to be and have been cleaned (as seen in other public venues).  There could be more of them covering longer hours Maybe they could wear pagers at weekends.	An audit of current cleaning timetables and status report of the current level of cleanliness and repair of all toilets has been undertaken.  Site Coordinators carry a mobile phone at weekends (0449 587 900). During the week the site coordinators are contactable through the ACF office.	current	
<b>10. Printed material</b>			
Make annual report available online, especially for tenants. Have more visible pick up points for material. Needs stronger coherent corporate branding.  A monthly newsletter.  A tourist booklet for visitors about the history of the site including a map of areas open to the public, toilets, eateries and a list of attractions with opening hours. Could include a	There are some excellent suggestions here. The ACF is going to review all printed communications and will consider all these recommendations as well as a 'one stop shop' 'mook' (cross between a magazine and a book) published twice a year that contains all user needs.  The Muse is currently only available electronically.  Printed material history, map, attractions and dates of markets are all available at the St Helier Store + Gallery and the ACF	Review planned for 2011/12 financial year	

list of market dates for the year. Site map Tenants directory	office.  Sari Harris (Mercator tenant) is currently working with the ACF to produce a tenant directory.	End November 2010.	
<b>11. Site signage</b>			
More signage, in the right places Nameplates A system that's easy to keep up to date Less subtle Map of the site Use a specialist consultant with experience of resolving way finding for similar large public venues Develop a signage strategy	A site-wide signage project is underway. Refer separate signage overview.	Refer separate signage overview	Refer separate signage overview
<b>12. Guided site tours</b>			
An iphone app version of the tour	This is already being developed by the ACF as part of an overall roll out of new technology. Funding for a scoping document has been secured to finance this project.	A scoping document has been commissioned to develop this project.	It is likely that an iphone app that delivers all users needs (way-finding + tours, what's on, reminders and invites) will cost around \$20K. Funding will be sought to further this project.
Run another tenant guided tour	A tenant tour will happen in the next month and be advertised via the weekly email and direct to new tenants.	Scheduled for Friday 29 October 2010.	
Take tours where the artists and tenants are.	The tour program currently exposes visitors to the work of artists and tenants via regularly changing exhibitions at the St Helier Store + Gallery, guiding the tour through the first floor of the Convent Building and the Mercator Building.		

	<p>As the bulk of tours happen on Sundays, it is rare to find artists or tenants present.</p> <p>Weekday tours do encounter artists or tenants in their studios and engage if appropriate. Note: some tenants have requested that tours do not disturb them.</p>		
<b>13. Meeting points (eg Steve's, C3, Community Store)</b>			
These need to develop organically – cannot force their success.	The tenant community will activate these meeting points according to need.		
A notice board near each one would be a good idea. Hold regular get togethers involving staff, board and tenants	The ACF will ask the appropriate tenants if they want to manage such an idea. Note: this has been tried before but can easily be activated again.		
<b>14. News media communications</b>			
Regular media releases profiling artists and events	ACF to consider allocating funds to contract a publicist on a retainer.	Pending increased revenue	Expenditure for a publicist will not be available in the immediate future however, it can be included in the next five year business plan as a desired outcome.
Consider investing a monthly half page advertisement in the local media to act as a what's on, current issues broadcast (much like City of Yarra does).	ACF to consider allocating funds to initiate such a commitment.	Pending increased revenue	To consider in the 2011/12 Fin year
<b>Other comments and suggestions</b>			
Perhaps tenant concerns needed to be given more consideration as there seems to be a perception concerns are	The aim of the two Working Parties that have been set up and the action coming		

<p>quickly dismissed.</p> <p>Development of a booklet to answer commonly asked questions from the public.</p> <p>Take amenity issues more seriously. OH&amp;S issues from a tenants' point of view.</p> <p>If you have a problem then do something about it: join a committee or get a group together or talk to the Board or the CEO.</p> <p>Consultation and explanation after decisions are made should be before. Two tenants sitting in on board meetings would be a good thing. Broader tenant to tenant communication and dispute resolution. Don't let the views (and gripes) of the minority dominate.</p> <p>The office and the board could tread the floorboards a little more often.</p> <p>Use the talent and creativity of the tenants more eg public sculpture, writing courses, life drawing classes.</p> <p>A meeting room for tenants.</p>	<p>out of them is designed to set a precedent for ongoing consideration and resolution of tenant concerns and issues as well as greater tenant consultation in decision making.</p> <p>A new volunteer program has been established to provide people on site during markets and events who can provide information.</p> <p>All OH&amp;S issues are taken seriously but are often budget dependant.</p> <p>The role of the Tenant Liaison Coordinator is to facilitate this type of communication.</p> <p>Refer item 7</p> <p>The ACF encourages tenant creativity and follow up activity and is happy to help facilitate.</p> <p>Refer item 13</p>		
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<p>An internal web page.</p> <p>And lots of calls for signage!</p>	<p>Refer item 3</p> <p>Refer item 11</p>		
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