

# Tenants' Community Consultative Forum Minutes – Thursday 24 August 2017

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## **ATTENDEES:**

**ACF Board Members:** Victoria Marles, Sally Romanes and Ruth Jones.

**ACF team members:** CEO Collette Brennan, Studio & Tenancy Manager Felicity Mark, Studio & Leasing Coordinator Cat Black-Dinham, Governance & Operations Officer Tom Rendell, Buildings & Facilities Manager David Campbell, Facilities Coordinator Peter Mandersloot, Marketing & Communications Manager Brooke Daly.

**Convent-based community members:** Graham Hardy, Michael O'Hanlon, Wendy Golden, Jo Saunders, Sharon Grigg, Linda Oy Ho, Ralf Kempken, Bridget Nicholson, Rick Matear, Matthew Butler, Eugenie Kawabata, Ilona Topolcsanyi, Katheryn Leopoldseder, Maggie Vaiopoulos, Judith Clifton and Joseph Conellan.

## **Item 1: UPDATE FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

### **a) Terminology of the word tenant**

In response to feedback in the last TCCF meeting, the use of the word Tenant has been changed slightly in line with tenants' requests to better reflect their connection with the Convent.

The ACF uses the terms Community, Tenant Community and Creative Community at different times for different audiences. When signing leases or sometimes when explaining our community in detail the term Tenant is still required. The Tenant Consultative Forum (TCF) has been renamed The Tenant Community Consultative Forum (TCCF).

### **b) PechaKucha**

Thank you to all those who attended the ACF tenant community's inaugural and highly successful PechaKucha night in June 2017.

The next PechaKucha night will be 23 November 2017, and all members of the tenant community are invited to participate and/or present. A 'save the date' has been included in the tenant community e-news, and presenters will be called for in late October/early November. All updates and reminders will be via the e-news. For any further information, please contact the Abbotsford Convent Administrator [Maddy Dorevitch](#).

### **c) Dealing with difficult or distressed people**

Following an agenda item raised in the last TCF (TCCF), the ACF reported that it is currently drafting a document will to assist the community when dealing with difficult or distressed people on site. This document will be circulated to our tenant community before the next meeting in December, and we will seek feedback from our community at that time. The aim is to create a joint document co-devised by the ACF team and our Convent-based community.

In the meantime, to reiterate from the last TCF meeting, the ACF is not formally trained in managing distressed people or people demonstrating mental health issues and is not qualified to diagnose or to intervene in serious incidents. Our strategy is to monitor and then refer to experts or Triple 000. Additional services include:

- The Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team (CATT)  
<http://www.mindhealthconnect.org.au/crisis-management>
- Healthdirect (1800 022 222)
- <https://www.alfredhealth.org.au/services/emergency-psychiatry>

The Convent community should contact the ACF if they have concerns about anyone. The hierarchy of who to call and when was outlined as follows

- Between 9 – 5.30pm, Mon – Fri please notify the Convent building Office. This can be in person or by phone 9415 3600
- Between 7am – 9am and 5.30pm – 9.30pm or, if you can't get through to the Convent Office you can call the ACF Site Coordinator 0438 380 833
- From 9.30pm - 1am you can contact the on-site security guard on 0477 006 299

If you feel unsafe at any time and the person in question could be vulnerable or a danger to themselves and others, please call 000 immediately.

#### **d) Cleaning and maintenance update**

The ACF's new Facilities Coordinator, Peter Mandersloot, is reviewing current cleaning contractors. This is in response to the tenant survey undertaken earlier this year. In addition, Peter also reported that he will be reviewing the cleanliness of the site and the performance of cleaning contractors on an ongoing basis. Since the previous TCF, dedicated weekly cleans of all Convent common areas are taking place in main Convent building.

It was also reported that maintenance work undertaken since the last TCCF included the repair of all the non-working sash windows in the main Convent building, and site-wide gutter cleaning works.

## **Item 2: BUILDING AND FACILITIES TEAM INTRODUCTION**

New ACF team members – Building and Facilities Manager David Campbell, and Facilities Coordinator Peter Mandersloot – introduced themselves to the tenant community. Both have been also been introduced to tenants via the tenants' community e-news, and their profiles can be found on the [Convent website](#).

## **Item 3: BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE**

The ACF's CEO Collette Brennan presented an overview of the ACF's Business Plan vision, purpose, strategic priorities and values, and reminded tenants that this has also previously been shared in the [tenants' community e-news](#). As part of her presentation, Collette shared the Convent's new vision and strategic priorities which are outlined in the Business Plan, which can also be found on the [Convent website](#). In response to a question from the community, it was reiterated that the vision, values and strategic priorities outlined in the ACF's Business Plan were based on the ACF's [strategic plan](#), which was devised by the ACF board and shared with tenants prior to her commencement As the remit of the Convent – as a leading arts,

cultural and learning precinct – has not changed, and as our Convent-based community remains key to the ACF's delivery of its mission and values, a wider consultation was not conducted.

ACF Marketing and Communications Manager Brooke Daly presented an overview on the ACF's strategic marketing priorities and audiences, reminding the tenant community that they are critical to the Convent's role and positioning as an engine room for creative practice, and that this underlies the Convent's overall messaging across social media and in The Humbug, etc. Brooke also outlined that the Convent's marketing and communications team has been working very closely with our tenant community to promote their work. She reported that more than 20% of the Convent's social media posts have been about tenants (promoting their work and exhibitions, etc.) over the past eight months, and that the ACF team publishes two blog interviews with tenants per month on average, heavily promoting our Convent-based community to wider audiences. Brooke reminded tenants to fill out the Convent's [online communications form](#) to provide the marketing and communications team with the information needed to place their work on the Convent's website.

#### **Item 4: SACRED HEART UPDATE**

The ACF team presented an update on the Sacred Heart restoration project including upcoming building works, which will be detailed in the weekly tenants' community e-news as usual. The ACF again communicated the role of the Nelson Alexander real estate agents, given some uncertainty from a few tenants in attendance. Nelson Alexander are: marketing leasable spaces; undertaking tours with prospective tenants; managing enquiries; and administrating incoming EOIs. Their engagement allows the Tenancy Team to focus on the needs of current tenants, as usual. An ACF panel (which does not include Nelson Alexander) will select Sacred Heart tenants, based on their ability to meet the specified key selection criteria outlined in the [Sacred Heart EOI Information Pack](#).

The following responses were provided during discussion:

- At this stage it is not confirmed whether a purpose built venue hire space for visual art making, preferably with a sink, will be created within the Sacred Heart restoration project. However, ACF Building and Facilities Manager, David Campbell, said he is willing to work with tenants to explore ways to make existing venue hire spaces fit for visual art making. These options will be explored following the tenanting of Sacred Heart.
- Open door space, atelier spaces and retail spaces are welcome within the remit of Sacred Heart ground floor spaces. They are not the only types of creative partners that will be considered for these spaces and ultimately the ACF is unable to confirm the mix of community until after the applications have been assessed.
- The ACF will select creative partners for the Sacred Heart spaces based on a criteria-based assessment. There are four criteria that have been developed in alignment to the ACF Business Plan. They are: Activation; Place; Viability; and Governance. Collette reiterated that prospective tenants' financial contributions (via paying rent) is one part of the selection criteria (under the viability section of the key selection criteria), and that, as outlined in the key selection criteria, prospective tenants are also assessed on their fit for the Convent in line with the ACF's remit, vision, strategic priorities and objectives, including prospective tenants' ability to drive audiences and visitation to the Convent
- The advertised rate for Sacred Heart is not an indication of rate changes for current leases in existing buildings

- In response to concerns from some of the Mercator tenants regarding their studios being a 'hidden' part of the Convent once Sacred Heart has been restored, the ACF confirmed that a public thoroughfare through to Mercator will be retained. The marketing and communications team said it is happy to support the promotion of the Mercator tenants also.

## **Item 5: RETAIL AT THE ABBOTSFORD CONVENT**

Studio and Tenancy Manager Felicity Mark reported that a round table was held in July at the request of a tenant with a retail business who wanted to discuss retail opportunities at the Convent. ACF members and tenants who had a retail business component to their practice attended the round table session. Out of this meeting came the idea of establishing a tenant driven Tenants' Retail Taskforce – a group who would work together over six weeks with the support of an ACF representative to consider the feasibility of activating a retail outcome at the Convent for the Christmas period.

The principles (developed by the ACF team) underpinning the Taskforce are as follows:

1. The Taskforce will run for six weeks from 4 September (first meeting) – Mid-October (over three to four meetings)
2. The objective of the Tenants' Retail Task Force is to develop recommendation/s to identify retail opportunities that are tenant driven in collaboration with the ACF
3. The purpose of these recommendation/s is to provide a concentrated forum for retailers at the ACF to consider collaborative opportunities for generating enhanced reputation, visibility and income for consideration by the broader ACF creative tenant community
4. These considerations will form a recommendation or number of recommendations to be put towards the greater ACF creative tenant community for consultation, with the view of activating an outcome for the Christmas period
5. There are unfortunately very limited additional resources, either staff, financial or otherwise available from the ACF, therefore all recommendations must consider this. The ACF is open to considering both short term and long terms ideas that may require a collaborative approach to securing resources to deliver on aspirations. The aim at this stage is to scope collaborative ideas, driven by our creative community of tenants, which the ACF supports as a member of this Taskforce.

Those at the roundtable who were interested in being part of the taskforce were asked to register their interest by the 1 September 2017.

A few of the tenants who had attended the roundtable meeting were disappointed with point 5 above, reporting that they felt this signified that the ACF wasn't committed to assisting with a retail initiative. CEO Collette Brennan said that point 5 was included to explain that the ACF is not in a position to provide financial or venue hire support for this initiative, particularly at a time when venue hire capacity is stretched given the Sacred Heart restoration. Collette said that by creating and facilitating the Retail Taskforce and allocating an ACF staff member to this, the ACF was supporting the discussion about ideas for retail initiatives at the Convent, as led by tenants.

A tenant in attendance asked about promoting their open studio for the public to visit. Marketing and Communications Manager Brooke Daly said that anyone who can commit to regular open hours (even if these are just a few hours a month) can be listed on the 'what's on' section of the Convent site. The tenant

community who attended this TCCF were invited to submit their opening hours via the Convent's [online communications form](#). Brooke also said a note would be included in the tenants' community e-news for all tenants wishing to promote their regular open studio hours.

#### **OTHER AGENDA MATTERS/MATTERS ARISING:**

- A “buy local policy” was raised by a tenant in attendance, and the ACF will investigate this further with the interested community member before the next TCCF
- Long time ACF board member and founding Abbotsford Convent Coalition member, Sally Romanes, was in attendance at the TCCF. As the last TCCF that Sally will attend, given her pending retirement from the ACF board, the Forum thanked her for all her invaluable work over many years at the Convent.

**Next meeting:** December 2017