

THE **ABBOTSFORD** CONVENT FOUNDATION

From the Chair



May 10, 2011

New directors begin Board renewal

Three new directors have been appointed to the Board of the Abbotsford Convent Foundation as part of the renewal process foreshadowed late last year.

The new directors are Anthony Cullen, Antonia Syme and Libby Ward-Christie. They were elected to the Board by unanimous vote on May 9. The appointments are effective immediately.

The combined skills of the three new directors will provide fresh impetus and energy as the Convent meets the challenges ahead under the second five-year Business Plan.

Before I discuss the new directors, I would like to pay tribute to two departing Board members who have chosen not to seek renewal of their directorships.

Roger Allen AM, chairman of venture capital company Allen & Buckeridge, has been a key driver behind the business development of the ACF. For a decade, his vision, entrepreneurial skills and commitment to the arts have helped keep the Board focused on the potential of the site despite the inevitable frustrations of creating something different.

Tim Hammon, CEO of Mutual Trust Pty Ltd, contributed key skills in strategic planning, business management, legal affairs and governance. Tim also chaired the Building Committee, which has overseen the capital works program and met the terms of the State Government Deed.

The ACF family owes a great debt to Roger and Tim and we plan to keep them connected to the Convent.

Now to our new directors. **Anthony Cullen** is well known to tenants and others closely involved with the Convent. He has been a consultant Chief Operating Officer

at the ACF for six months. His performance, energy and success in that role convinced us that he would be an asset to the Board with his experience in property, leasing, project management and finance. Anthony was an executive at Fairfax Media for 10 years. He was Project Director for Fairfax's \$100 million new building in Melbourne after playing key roles in supervising the Fairfax shift to new headquarters in Sydney. For seven years he was chairman of the Fairfax Foundation and a Trustee Director of Fairfax Super.

Antonia Syme brings superb arts management and other skills to the Board. Antonia is Director of the Australian Tapestry Workshop, formerly the Victorian Tapestry Workshop. Based in South Melbourne, the workshop is one of the leaders in weaving contemporary tapestry. She is also a director of Syme Dodson Consulting, which provides specialist advice on collecting and managing all aspects of fine art and museum collections. For two years, Antonia was Manager of Development Strategy at the College of Fine Arts at the University of New South Wales. For ten years before that, Antonia was Director of Artbank, the Australian Government's contemporary art rental collection agency, where she doubled revenue and support to artists.

Libby Ward-Christie has an unusual and compelling set of skills for the future of the Convent. Libby is Manager of Investment and Growth at Social Traders Ltd, which builds social enterprise by preparing organisations for business. She also has a Master of Landscape Architecture and experience in local government as a Community Engagement Manager and Environmental and Open Space Planner. Libby also lives in the local community.

Our new directors were selected through a process directed by the Board's Governance Committee. The process began with analysis of the skills required by the Board in view of the strategic directions of the ACF and existing Board skills, taking into account likely departures from the Board. It also took into account the recommendations of an independent Board review undertaken by OPPEUS in 2008.

Board members used their networks to identify potential directors. Tenants were also asked for suggestions and we were delighted by the positive response from a number of tenants. Priority candidates were identified and interviewed.

The Governance Committee is continuing its search and more appointments are likely later in the year.

The Board has also appointed Michael Smith as a co-deputy chair. He joins Charlotte Allen in that role. This restores the structure of some years ago before Michael left the Board before his return last year.

The draft of a Business Plan for the next five years is nearing completion. Charlotte has prepared a community consultation program for tenants and other stakeholders that the Board approved at its meeting 9 May. A draft will be available in early June and discussed at a tenants' meeting prior to it coming to the Board for ratification.

A first draft of the CEO's Artistic Vision, which is part of the Business Plan, has been circulated through the Tenants and Site Development Committee and is on the ACF web site.

A key issue for the Business Plan is balancing the desirability of completing the capital development of the site with the need to maintain and enhance the existing buildings and community.

The ACF has exceeded almost all the objectives of the first five-year plan but the rapid growth has brought stresses on the physical assets and the social development. Our unique asset is the buildings, but the ultimate value of the Convent is embedded in its people. Both must be developed and nurtured for the benefit of all Victorians, who must be the ultimate beneficiaries of everything we do.

I am confident that the Board is assembling the people and the skills to get this balance right in the next stage of the Convent's development.

Hayden Raysmith AM
Chair
Abbotsford Convent Foundation