

Minutes

Ainslie Arts Centre Resident Advisory Group

Meeting #R-A-20-01

Date: 17/09/2020

Venue: Function room, Ainslie Arts Centre

Start time: 1:34 pm

End Time: 2:23 pm

Chair: AJ America

Residents attending:

Angela Hannan (CIMF)

Di Miley
(Australian National
Eisteddford)

Peter Thomson (MFC)

Ruth O'Brien

Arts Capital board/staff

Mark Van Veen, Chair

Joseph Falsone, CEO

Adelin Chin, Business Manager

Adelaide Rief, Program Manager

Lachlan Johnson, Administration and Customer Service

Apologies:

No apologies received.

Agenda Item

Item 1 Welcome and Terms of Reference

Mark Van Veen (MVV) welcomed residents on behalf of the board and introduced AJ America (AJ) as meeting chair. AJ welcomed residents to the first meeting of the Ainslie Arts Centre Resident Advisory Group, and drew the group's attention to the Terms of Reference included in the meeting papers as attachment A. It was noted that the board had decided to establish two resident advisory groups, rather than one as originally envisaged, to create greater opportunity to focus on the unique needs of Ainslie Arts Centre residents, and given the large difference in the number of residents at each centre.

Joseph Falsone (JF) gave a brief overview of the governance changes that had occurred following a special general meeting in late 2019, resulting in the transition from Gorman House Arts Centre Incorporated to Arts Capital Limited. JF explained that under the old Rules of Association, Ainslie Arts Centre residents were not members, and that it was hoped the new advisory group would create a forum for closer discussion with Ainslie residents about issues that mattered to them and the future of the arts centre.

The meeting attendees were asked to introduce themselves for the benefit of newer residents and staff.

AJ asked for clarification about the Objects of Arts Capital, and specifically the words 'Arts development'. JF responded by noting that it had been included to acknowledge the longstanding work of the arts centres and residents focussed on developing not only arts practice and new works, but also careers and organisations. This was a focus of a variety of programs and a key strength of resident organisations.

It was confirmed that no additional agenda items had been suggested by residents for this meeting.

Item 2 Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were raised in relation to the meeting agenda.

Item 3 Financial Status and Activities of Arts Capital

JF spoke to the audit report, CEO update and charts included in the meeting papers (Attachments B1, B2, and B3). JF explained that annual financial audit reports will be presented each year to the advisory group and noted that, while the Terms of Reference provided for this to be done in the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting (AGM), no such meeting was held this year as GHAC Inc. no longer exists and Arts Capital would not hold an AGM until after its first year of operation.

JF noted that in 2019, GHAC Inc. had met its budget target with a modest \$19K surplus, and highlighted that the audit report showed the income and expense pattern typical pre-COVID, with 19% of total income received via key arts organisation funding. JF noted that what had been a form of resilience – the growth in diverse sources of earned income – would prove a vulnerability during the COVID crisis in 2020.

JF noted that Arts Capital had secured the crisis support it had been advocating for in 2020, and shared the news that a full 9 months of rent relief for all residents had been confirmed

now that the ACT Government had agreed to a further 3-month extension (with commercial sub-licensees to provide evidence of decline in turnover). The mix of Federal and ACT Government support through JobKeeper, ATO Cashflow boost, and the COVID emergency relief fund meant that the financial position for 2020 was sound. By mid-2021, however, new funding would need to be negotiated with the ACT Government if earned revenue did not return to closer to pre-COVID levels.

Peter Thomson asked whether earned income included venue hire by resident organisations. JF replied that yes, income from residents was included in the venue hire total in the audited figures – the aggregate figure includes resident venue hire, external hirers, and weddings and corporate events. Program-related venue hire (e.g. for concerts and public events) was included under program income.

JF referred to the CEO Update contained in the meeting papers, noting that it will be a regular email and is open to feedback from residents on the type of information they would like shared.

JF spoke about the ACT Government's 2019-2020 budget allocation for comprehensive centenary renovation designs for both centres, informing the group that Philip Leeson Architects have now been engaged by the ACT Government to commence work on the plans. They will deliver final sketch plans including costing and staging, by mid-2021. JF noted that the separate site safety project also underway, and referred to in the CEO update, was still subject to final scope decisions by artsACT, but according to recent meetings would likely focus on upgrading external paths and hardstand areas at Ainslie Arts Centre to reduce trip hazards.

Ruth asked for an update on the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) project. JF thanked Ruth for her contribution to the Disability Advisory group and confirmed the DIAP is in final draft stage pending board approval in the final quarter of 2020. JF noted that it would be endorsed in time to be included in the new strategic plan, and implemented from 2021. The plan would be shared with residents once approved by the board.

Item 4 COVID -19 Hardship Policy

AJ drew the group's attention to Attachments C1 and C2 of the meeting papers.

It was noted that an important element of the policy discussion paper was to extend the provisions of the mandatory code of conduct and ACT Government's changes to commercial leasing beyond only those who are eligible for JobKeeper, and beyond sub-licenses – meaning that Arts Capital would afford the same consideration to residents at Ainslie, and in Gorman Commons, who have signed service agreements.

JF asked if there is anything else the advisory group needed from the hardship policy in terms of support.

AJ noted that since COVID venue capacity restrictions had begun, venue hire for larger rooms had attracted the same price as smaller rooms, in cases where the smaller room was no longer able to be used for the usual number of people. AJ asked if this would be an ongoing feature of support included in the hardship policy. JF noted that it would be reasonable to add this to the draft policy for the board.

Item 5 Recruitment of new Arts capital Company Directors

MVV spoke to Attachment D of the meeting papers, reminding the group that four board vacancies had been created during the transition to Arts Capital and the board was now

seeking to inform and involve residents in the expression of interest (EOI) process. It was stressed that diverse applicants are sought in line with the criteria contained in the constitution. The group was informed that an EOI call-out will be advertised on 28 September 2020, through the marketing channels listed in Attachment D.

Item 6 Other Agenda Items

Angela Hannan raised the suggestion that amenity for residents and users of the arts centre could be greatly improved by providing suitable tables and chairs in the courtyard. The idea was discussed, including the pros and cons of furniture in other areas of the grounds. JF replied that it would certainly be reasonable to purchase furniture for the courtyard, and that this would be done. JF also noted that the question of landscaping generally was one that would be looked at in the centenary renovation planning, and encouraged residents to consider ideas in that context.

Item 7 Next Meeting

MVV and AJ thanked residents for attending and noted that the next meeting would be held at 1.30pm on 19 November.