

Minutes

Gorman Arts Centre Resident Advisory Group

Meeting #G-20-002-G

Date: 19/11/2020 Venue: Main Hall, Gorman Arts Centre

Start time: 12:04 pm End Time: 1:04 pm

Meeting Chair: Lauren Honcope (Ausdance ACT)

Residents attending:

Amelie Langevin (QL2 Dance)

Bryn Evans

Cathy Adamek (Ausdance ACT)

Cherylynn Holmes

Franki Sparke

Hugh Withycombe (Musicale)

Kirsten Biven

Lucy Alexander

Luke Rogers (CYT)

Nicci Haynes

Phoebe Porter

Robin Davidson (Rebus)

Ruth Osborne (QL2 Dance)

Stuart McMillen

Arts Capital board/staff attending:

Mark van Veen, Chair

Joseph Falsone, CEO

Adelin Chin, Business Manager

Lachlan Johnson, Strategic Planning Officer

Apologies:

Kimmo Vennonen

James Judge (Steople)

Ben Drysdale (Rebus)

Andrew Sikorski (art Atelier)

Agenda Item

Item 1 Welcome and apologies

Lauren Honcope (LH) began with an acknowledgement of country recognising the traditional custodians of the land on which the meeting was being held.

Meeting apologies were noted.

Item 2 Notes from the previous meeting

No follow-up issues were raised relating to the minutes of the last meeting, a link to which had been circulated to residents in advance of the meeting. Noting that unlike at the previous meeting, paper copies were not present at this meeting, LH suggested that anyone who had not yet read them might do so after the meeting and provide feedback to JF before the end of the year.

Item 3 Update from the board chair

LH invited Mark Van Veen (MVV) to provide an update on board recruitment and strategic planning. MVV summarised Arts Capital's board recruitment progress, primarily that a total of 23 applications had been received for up to four vacant positions, including strong interest from interstate. The board was impressed not only by the quantity of applications but also the quality. Four successful applicants had been chosen and would be announced after the upcoming Arts Capital General Meeting, when their appointment would be finalised. MVV noted that all four nominated candidates would bring diverse skillsets and improve gender balance on the board.

MVV thanked the advisory group for assisting with the recruitment process, particularly residents who had spread the word or recommended that candidates apply.

MVV advised that the board was about to embark on a new project of strategic planning that would continue through until the end of January 2021.

Item 4 Update from the CEO

Joseph Falsone (JF) spoke about the outcome of the ACT election, primarily the increased number of seats held by the ACT Greens. Arts Capital had been in conversation with the ACT Greens in the lead up to the election and they had expressed a desire to address structural issues in the arts such as funding transparency, a priority which has been in the Labor/Greens parliamentary agreement.

JF also spoke about ACT Labor's \$8 million election commitment to renovate Gorman Arts Centre by 2024, a commitment also reflected in the parliamentary agreement. After extensive lobbying, this welcome commitment means that the already-funded renovation planning project due to deliver sketch plans in the second half of 2021 can now closely be followed by budget allocations to deliver the works.

This centenary renovation project is just now entering into its planning stage with Philip Leeson Architects appointed by the ACT Government. JF explained that it would fall to Arts Capital to organise stakeholder engagement. It is anticipated that this would include surveys,

group meetings, written submissions, and face to face meetings. This process would also feed into the strategic planning project.

Hugh Withycombe (HW) enquired about the timeline of this process, JF advised that the start date for the architects' work had already been delayed but that it was still likely that a survey would be issued before Christmas, with meetings would take place in February 2021.

Robin Davidson (RD) asked about the scope of the feedback A+G were looking for and JF advised that the initial focus would be on inviting stakeholders, including residents and regular users of the arts centres, to articulate their needs, before moving to discussion of how, and how many, of those needs could be met by renovations. JF acknowledged that the project would inevitably fall short of meeting all the needs of so many different individuals and organisations, and that ultimately the ACT Government owned the facilities. Arts Capital is nonetheless committed to listening deeply to the needs of stakeholders to inform the project.

LH asked how many artists and arts organisations this project involved and JF advised there are more than 50 residents across both centres and that the majority (over 40) were located at Gorman. Beyond that, there are concentric circles of stakeholders, with several dozen regular hirers and program partners who regularly use the centres in the next circle, before considering the broader community.

JF discussed the imminent expiry of our Gorman Arts Centre head licence and the one-year extension head licence that artsACT has foreshadowed but is currently sitting with the ACT Government Solicitor's office. In terms of the current sub-licences, there is a holding over clause that allows sub-licensees to continue to occupy premises on the same terms and conditions, beyond the sub-licence expiry date, with Arts Capital's consent. The holding over clause gives both parties a one-month notice opportunity to terminate. JF noted that it was not envisaged that any sub-licensees who met the terms of their sub-licence currently would be asked to vacate, and that our strong preference would be to sign new sub-licences as soon as possible after a new head licence has been signed, to ensure we maintain a vibrant resident community and avoid vacancies.

HW asked what would happen if artsACT do not offer a new head license and JF advised that the possibility is considered extremely remote. artsACT has repeatedly confirmed in meetings and emails that they will be issuing a year extension; it is only being held up by a process issue at artsACT's end that requires document approval by the ACT Government Solicitor.

Item 5 Sharing and discussion

LH opened a discussion with the group, offering advisory group members the opportunity to reflect on 2020 and share their experiences. The comment was made that while it hadn't gone as planned, 2020 had been a largely positive experience for people that provided individuals with opportunities to meet members of the ACT arts sector they may not have met otherwise. A sense of experimentation brought about through necessity was also discussed.

Gratitude was expressed by the group to the ACT Government and A+G for the 9 months' rent relief support provided during 2020. Franki Sparke and Nicci Haynes wished to note that the Artist Toolkit program delivered by A+G was a useful form of support that assisted artists with their practice in 2020. Adelaide Rief and Rochelle Whyte were thanked for their work on this program.

A desire for greater certainty was also expressed, especially where signage and access were concerned. JF advised that a signage review was currently underway and that A+G would be looking to replace temporary laminated signs with consolidated vinyl signage solutions before

the end of the year as well as minimising the sign-in station clutter and projecting a more inviting and open tone than had been adopted at the height of COVID lockdown.

Toilet access was also discussed, with JF explaining the security risk that necessitated the installation of keypads, which also gave the option of segmenting hirer and resident access to minimise the risk of a full shutdown if contact tracing ever identified a COVID case. A desire for a more functional long-term solution such as swipe pass access was expressed, an approach which could be included in centenary renovation planning.

Internet access issues were voiced by a number of residents, not only in studios but also in performance spaces. JF advised that while our fibre-to-the-premises broadband was robust, several access points in corridors were failing and would now be replaced after 5 years of service, and also that we were canvassing quotes to extend the network further. We are also meeting with an alternative IT support provider in January to negotiate a potential new network maintenance and support contract to improve customer service.

Item 6 Date and Time of Next Meeting

JF advised that the next meeting would be held early in February 2021, with dates for the year to be advertised in January 2021.

LH thanked residents for attending and closed the meeting at 1.04pm.