

Abbotsford Convent Foundation

Annual Review 16/17



Abbotsford
Convent



Contents

Vision	4
Purpose	5
A Message from the Chair	6
A Message from the CEO	7
Key Highlights	8
Programs	10
Key Programs and Commissions	12
New Partnerships and Events	14
Galleries	16
People	18
Creative Onsite Community	20
Volunteer and Online Communities	22
Place	24
A Place to Meet	26
Protecting Our Precious Place	28
Finances	30
Supporters	34
Board and Team	36
Volunteers	37
Thank You	38

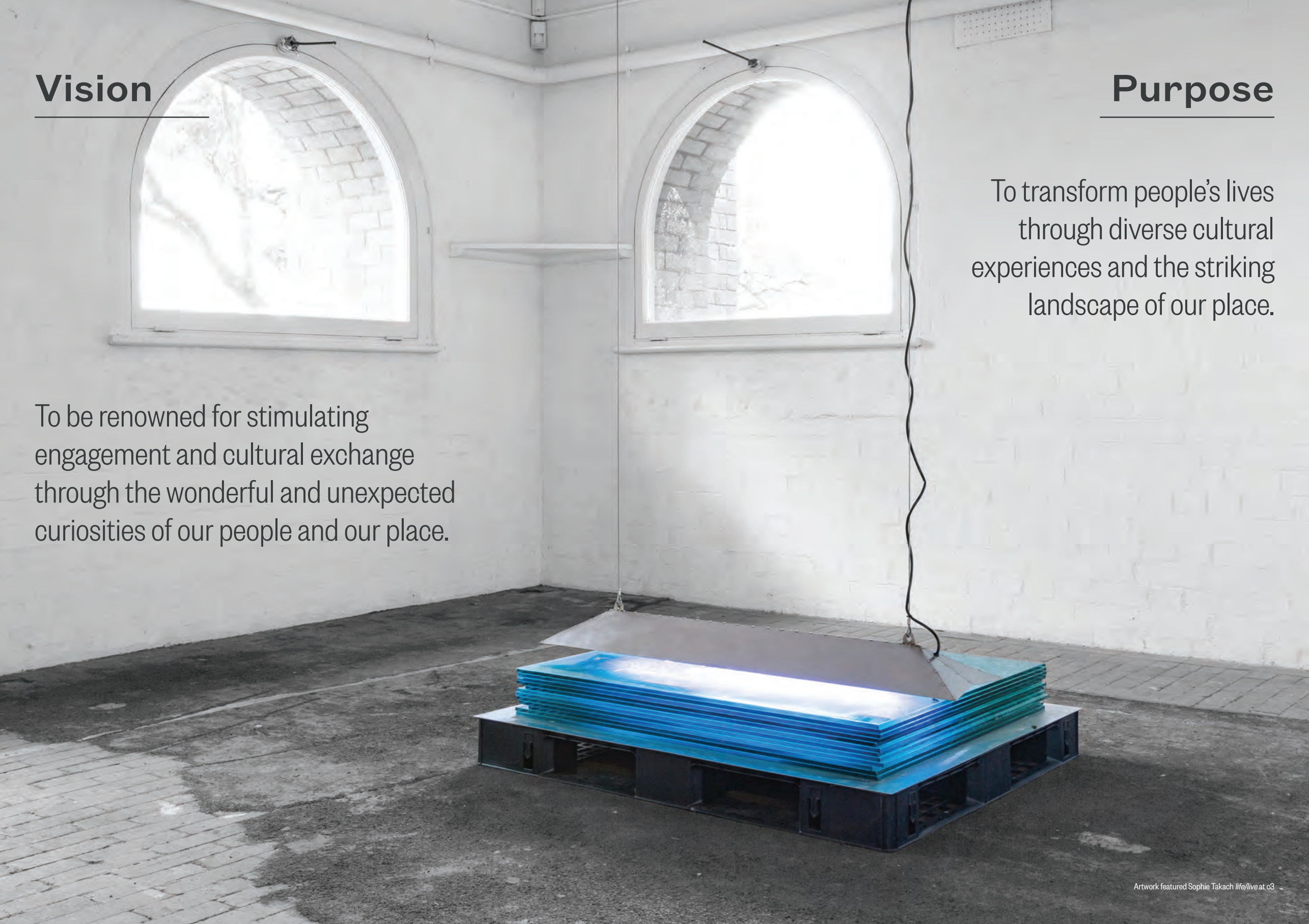
Cover: Valentina Palonen *Purplestar*.
 Opposite images from left to right, top to bottom: Sophie Takach *life/live*; Victoria Marles
 Abbotsford Convent Foundation Board Chair; Claire and Jasmine Robertson *Above and Below*
 work in progress; Jessi Lewis; Liquid Architecture *Polyphonic Social (your voice in my head,*
and mine in yours) 2017 photo by Keelan O'Hehir; artwork by Alicia King; Wurundjeri Elders Ron
 Jones and Allan Wandin; Asphyxia; Moyna Wilson; Nigel Lewis; Tim Darbyshire *Tainted Title*
 work in progress; Magdalen Laundries.

Vision

To be renowned for stimulating engagement and cultural exchange through the wonderful and unexpected curiosities of our people and our place.

Purpose

To transform people's lives through diverse cultural experiences and the striking landscape of our place.



A Message from the Chair



Victoria Marles

The Convent will be open for business inside and out, offering new ways to engage with our buildings, galleries, grounds and gardens, including via our own increased year-round arts and cultural programming, as well as that of our Convent-based creative community, and our collaborators and partners.

So, how did we track in the first year of delivering our new strategic priorities? On the activation front, highlights included Open Spaces 2016 – which saw a record 9,000 visitors enjoy a fantastic day of contemporary art, music, workshops and design – and four new site-specific art commissions, which invited audiences to engage with the artists in their studios and around the site. Commissions included Joanna Buckley's stunning Providence building 'gold leaf wall', *The Light and the Ground* – already a visitor attraction in its own right.

Our strategic priorities of place and viability are inherently linked, and thanks to our generous community and partners, we again delivered two highly successful fundraising campaigns in 2016/17.

Funds raised from our 2016 Keep it Green campaign will help protect our grounds and gardens, and deliver new sustainability initiatives. Sustainability was also at the heart of last year's Solar Project campaign, which this year enabled the installation of a 98kW solar system, saving 100 tonnes of emissions. We also raised more than \$100,000 needed to restore our heritage rotunda. Thanks to public donations and funding from Victoria's Heritage Restoration Fund, together with generous matched funding from our major partner the Copland Foundation, our community will again be able to rest, read, and enjoy arts and cultural programming in this stunning space.

Supporting our staff forms a key governance priority, and we are investing in the systems and resources needed to develop our people to deliver our future needs.

Our success depends on community, philanthropic, government and industry support, collaborations and partnerships. I thank everyone who contributed to our success this year, including Collette Brennan and her team. While we have ambitious plans, under Collette's leadership and vision, which has been instrumental to securing many of our new partnerships in particular, our future is bright.

As we reflect on 2016/17, it is no exaggeration to say that this year was one of the Abbotsford Convent Foundation's (ACF's) biggest yet.

August 2016 saw the Convent farewell founding CEO, Maggie Maguire OAM, after a remarkable 11 year tenure. We were delighted to see Maggie recognised for service to the visual and performing arts in Victoria with a Medal of the Order of Australia this year – further attesting to her legacy.

Building on this strong foundation, September 2017 saw the beginning of a new era for the Convent, with a new Strategic Plan in place, and a new CEO, Collette Brennan, to deliver and build on this.

While the ACF's original priority was to 'prove the model' by 'surviving', followed by achieving a base level of financial sustainability, our next phase is focussed on finishing restorations and activating the whole site.

The Sacred Heart restoration – our biggest capital works project since restorations began more than a decade ago – is key to this, as is the Laundries restoration. With both projects due for completion next year, we will move from 60 per cent of our site being restored and ready for use, to 90 per cent.

In preparation for this significant shift, our new Strategic Plan outlines four strategic priorities – activation, place, viability and governance.

A Message from the CEO



Collette Brennan

Based on these pillars and priorities, this year we proudly delivered our new Business Plan and vision – *To be renowned for stimulating engagement and cultural exchange through the wonderful and unexpected curiosities of our people and our place.*

The Business Plan outlines our goals for the next five years, including our most ambitious arts and cultural program to date, and I am pleased to report that new partnerships and events delivered this year – ranging from sonic sound art and children's writing, to celebrating local produce – attracted 8,850 visitors, many of them new to the Convent. This was in addition to our core key programs, including Open Spaces, Social History Tours and Convent Conversations, which attracted more than 10,000 visitors this year, up 21% on 2015/16.

Our galleries play a critical role in developing our reputation as a leading arts destination, and this year more than 27,000 people visited c3 Contemporary Art Space, up 24% on last year.

Our Convent-based community is also critical to our arts and cultural programming, including by exhibiting and offering classes at the Convent.

While we are proudly embracing change via our new Business Plan and curatorial vision, we are committed to remaining accessible and honouring our grass-roots and community-driven model.

We recognise that there are many reasons our community makes close to 1 million visits to the Convent each year – from meeting friends at our fantastic eateries and holding business strategy days, to visiting our wellbeing practitioners and resting in our stunning gardens.

On that note, it is with great admiration and respect that I acknowledge that this year marks 20 years since the community commenced its seven-year-long campaign to save the Convent from residential development; a movement which became one of Australia's most successful community campaigns to date.

It was that vision – to create a community arts, cultural and learning precinct – which continues to underpin the Convent's direction and success today. I thank those original campaigners, and all of our communities, for your loyal support as we enter an exciting new era based on such strong foundations.

It is with great pleasure that I present my first Annual Review as CEO of the Abbotsford Convent Foundation (ACF) – and what a year it has been.

Following the Board's delivery of a strong, directional Strategic Plan, the ACF team commenced work on a new Business Plan in 2017.

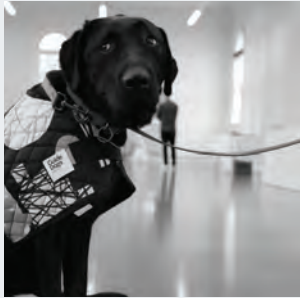
Driven by the mandate to activate the Convent site inside and out over the next five years – with the dual, interlinked aims of increasing visitation and strengthening our financial viability – it is clear that our success is underpinned by three pillars; our programming, our people and our place.

We need to deliver a distinctive arts and cultural curatorial vision which informs our year-round program, providing audiences and visitors with more reasons to come to the Convent, more often.

We need to attract the artists, creatives, makers, educators and events needed to activate our spaces and deliver programming, creating new conversations and experiences that engage existing audiences and bring new visitors to the Convent.

And we need to preserve our unique, heritage-protected place, while being creative and imaginative about how we – the ACF and our community – use our spaces, including our buildings, galleries, grounds and gardens.

Key Highlights



27,773

Visitors attended exhibitions at c3
↑ 24%



9,000

Visitors came to Open Spaces
↑ 29%



235

People attended Convent Conversations
↑ 41%

17,427

People now follow us on Facebook
↑ 18%



209

Artists exhibited at c3
↑ 19%



8,850

Visitors attended new events



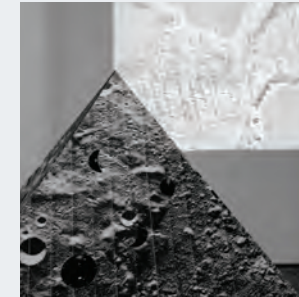
11,000

People attended learning workshops
↑ 13%



2.5 million

Litres of rainwater was harvested



344

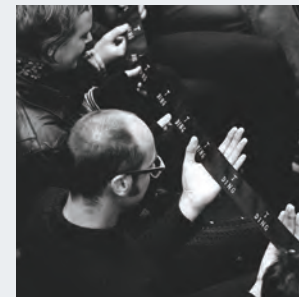
Solar panels were installed

102 Community volunteers donated their time
↑ 10%



583

Planning days and meetings were held
↑ 15%



\$100,000+

Was raised for the rotunda restoration



Images from left to right, top to bottom: Gorman and Elk dog accessories launch with Guide Dogs Victoria; work by Ingmar Apinis; work by Alan Constable; Tari Bird Sew Your Own Adventure; Open Spaces Design Market; Liquid Architecture Wurundjeri Council Tour photo by Keelan O'Hehir.

Images from left to right, top to bottom: Open Spaces; Open Spaces; Rock & Roll Writers Festival; work by Rebecca Nadjowski; Lin Chi-Wei *Tape Music* photo by Keelan O'Hehir; Joanna Buckley *The Light and the Ground*.

Above and Below

"Being commissioned by the Abbotsford Convent Foundation (ACF) provided me with the time, space, facilities and support needed to be experimental, to embark on a brand new project and collaboration, and to present this work to an audience.

In addition to the financial investment in my work, and my week-long residency at the Convent, the ACF team also provided invaluable production, professional development and marketing support.

The work was made in collaboration with Jasmine Robertson. As part of our research, we invited members of the public to participate in an interactive group meditation on the banks of the Yarra River. Fifty participants joined in via an app recording. Following on from this, Jasmine and I developed a site-responsive two-channel video work produced at the Convent.

Above and Below has since been shortlisted for a number of prizes including the Churchie Art Award, Brisbane, where it will exhibit at the QUT Art Museum."

Claire Robertson

About the Work

Above and Below marks Claire Robertson's first collaboration with her sister, Jasmine Robertson, combining their respective disciplines of video and movement. The work responds to a site at the Abbotsford Convent. As her sister performs in the space, Robertson captures the process through multiple cameras and mirrors, traversing between filmmaker and performer. The work explores the boundaries of self in relation to others and our built and natural environment.

This project was proudly commissioned by the Abbotsford Convent Foundation

Photo courtesy of the artist.



Key Programs and Commissions

From art trails and algorithms...

As an engine room of creativity, the Convent is committed to sharing the practice of 'making and creating' by directly connecting audiences with artists. This year's key programs and commissions spurred new conversations, provided unique insights into artistic practice and even invited audiences to co-create new works!

The Convent's biggest day of the year, Open Spaces, connected audiences with 150 artists, writers, musicians, designers and performers, and encouraged visitors to explore the site via *Art Trail*, featuring nine commissioned works by local and international artists. Works included Jennifer Whitten's *Fermata Suite*, which used the text from police accounts of a tragic event to generate musical compositions via computer-generated algorithms, and Tarli Bird's *Sew Your Own Adventure*, allowing visitors to retrace their footsteps by hand-stitching tracks onto a map of the Convent. Open Spaces welcomed a record 9,000 people (up 29% on last year).

Sharing diverse voices and stimulating thought-provoking discussions, Convent Conversations also attracted record numbers, with 235 attendees (up 41%) hearing firsthand from visionaries in the fields of law, Indigenous affairs, the arts, asylum seeker advocacy and sustainable farming.

Music in the Round also delivered its largest program to date, with 26 musicians performing 12 concerts, allowing aficionados and first-time attendees alike to transcend 300 years of classical music.

The commencement of the Sacred Heart restoration spurred great interest in the Convent's Social History Tours, with 834 people attending to learn more about the site's historical significance.

To grand gold walls and 'going about your business'...

Autumn 2017 saw visitors and audiences transfixed by new sights and sounds, with four commissioned artworks responding to the Convent's unique history and architecture developed and delivered on site.

Above and Below by Claire Robertson and Jasmine Robertson – which comprised of a live group meditation on the banks of the Yarra, Butoh dance and a short film – explored the fine line between interior and exterior, physical and psychological, and above and below.

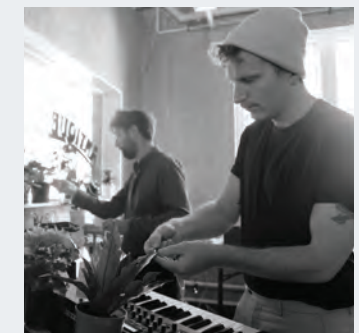
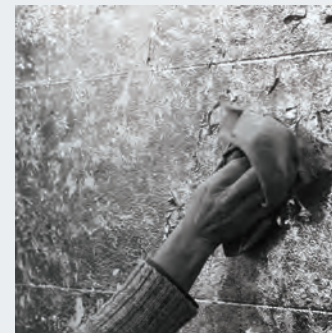
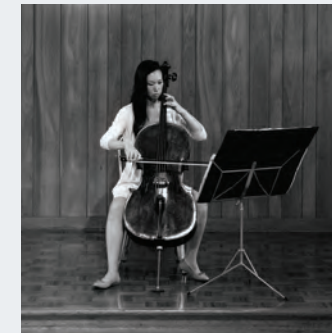
Katie Lee's *Cross-Section* delivered roving performances and video installations, exploring the idea of the Convent as a Town Square, as visitors wondered if Lee was 'just another person going about her business', pushing, manoeuvring and displaying sculptural objects around the Convent, using the grounds and businesses as the context for her work.

Children and adults alike created their own musical compositions with the brush of a hand over plants and walls, learning how conductive materials and coding can create unique soundscapes, thanks to *PLAYSpace* by Playable Streets.

The Light and the Ground saw a stunning transformation of the Providence building, as Joanna Buckley's 'gold wall' installation brought the beautiful heritage building to life with a semi-permanent gold patina. As well as interacting with Joanna as she worked, audiences were even invited to join in, adding 'gold leaf' to the wall.

From contemporary art commissions, to classical music, the Convent's key programs attracted more than 10,000 visitors to the Convent in the last year.

Images from left to right, top to bottom: Jessi Lewis; Emilie Walsh; *Cross-Section* photo by Clare Rae; *PLAYSpace*; *Fermata Suite*; *Art Trail*; *The Light and the Ground*; Tim Darbyshire *Tainted Title* work in progress; Esther Sandler and Caitlin Shearer for Open Spaces; Jessi Lewis; *Cross-Section* photo by Clare Rae; Playable Streets.



New Partnerships and Events

From sound meditation, soundscapes and storytelling...

Developing new partnerships with leading arts and cultural organisations is key to the Convent's programming vision to support independent artists and thinkers who deliver contemporary work.

Working with our partners, we aim to attract diverse audiences, create thought-provoking conversations and offer new ways to engage with our unique, multi-use site.

In line with this vision, we developed a number of new partnerships this year, activating the site through sonic soundscapes, children's book trails and even a taste of rock 'n' roll.

From sound meditations to computer-generated compositions, we partnered with Liquid Architecture to deliver truly unique sound art, including impressive Australian debuts by acclaimed Irish musician Áine O'Dwyer, and legend of Taiwanese sonic art Lin Chi-Wei.

From at-capacity concerts to roaming performances, more than 450 people experienced sound as never before, with this new partnership seeing the Convent home to Liquid Architecture's *Polyphonic Social* for three years.

We also secured a new partnership with the Rock & Roll Writers Festival – Australia's only literary festival celebrating the creative relationship between writing and music – marking the first time the festival has toured from Brisbane.

Close to 100 people attended to hear from 19 of Australia's top talents, including singer-songwriters Cash Savage, Mike Noga and Jess Ribeiro, who delved into the motivations and madness of songwriting, and Bunna Lawrie, lead singer and songwriter of Coloured Stone, who discussed the impact of place and identity on the creative process.

In a new partnership with Kids' Own Publishing, 157 children took inspiration from the Convent's stunning gardens to create their own books thanks to the *Your Secret Garden* program. Led by favourite children's authors and illustrators, including Leigh Hobbs (*Mr. Chicken Goes to Paris* and *Horrible Harriet*), this event was a huge success, with 100% of participating families saying they would attend future children's programs at the Convent, and 86% rating this program as very good or excellent.

The Convent's longstanding partnerships, such as that held with Melbourne Fringe, also continue to deliver dedicated audiences. The Convent is home to Fringe Furniture – the vanguard for iconic, eclectic, cutting-edge industrial design – and 2016 saw 77 artists deliver 85 works, attracting 5,213 visitors, up 5% on 2015.

To meeting local makers, world music and working with words...

Positioning the Convent as a leading destination for diverse events, and activating the Convent site for visitors to enjoy inside and out, is a key priority.

New events this year included Brewers Feast, with 1,500 people connecting firsthand with award-winning local brewers to learn about beer making, tasting and food-pairing, while good, ethical produce was also key to the Meat Your Maker event, attracting 400 attendees. Text Appeal, delivered by City of Yarra Libraries, celebrated group reading in the Convent's gardens, while The Boîte Singers' Festival also made its debut at the Convent, delivering more than 30 workshops and concerts over three big days.

Together these new partnerships and events attracted more than 8,850 visitors to the Convent.

Liquid Architecture *Polyphonic Social* (*your voice in my head, and mine in yours*)
Photo by Keelan O'Hehir.



Galleries

From cultivating live mould and excavating earth at c3...

Mysterious levitating objects... A household's belongings replicated in tiny paper objects... Half a tonne of excavated earth... Live cultivating mould... This year the Convent's c3 Contemporary Art Space continued to deliver boundary-pushing, risk-taking and even ocean-traversing works!

Since launching in 2008, c3 has literally grown from the ground up, with the Convent team building the gallery with their bare hands, and growing its highly-dedicated audience and artist base over time.

This year the gallery entered a new era of growth and development, appointing a second staff member, part-time Gallery Manager Katie Paine, to join founding Director, Jon Butt.

Attesting to the gallery's fast-growing reputation as one of Australia's most significant artist-led initiatives, this year a record 341 artists applied to exhibit at c3, up 14% on last year, with a total of 209 artists selected to exhibit – 34 more than exhibited last year.

Also attesting to the gallery's significance was new funding from state and local governments, with Creative Victoria investing \$40,000 into c3's new Professional Development and Mentorship Program, commencing later in 2017, and the City of Yarra providing \$10,000 towards programming and accessibility initiatives.

The gallery also established new international connections, with *Proximity* marking the Australian debut of contemporary Filipino artists Ivy Marie Apa, Nice Buenaventura, Alfred Marasigan, Nomar Bayog Miano, Gigi Ocampo and Soika Vomiter, curated by Tania Smith.

In line with the Convent's commitment to connecting audiences with artists, c3 delivered two artists' talks and nine performance works, including a durational performance by Michelle James, Tace Kelly and Jacqui Gordon which explored Australian history and decolonisation theory and practice.

A major highlight was c3's fundraising initiative, FAUX Studio. Marking the final of the three-part 'FAUX' series, this was the biggest exhibition yet, featuring more than 500 works by 91 artists. Proceeds from sold works were split evenly between the gallery, lowering fees for next year, and the artists.

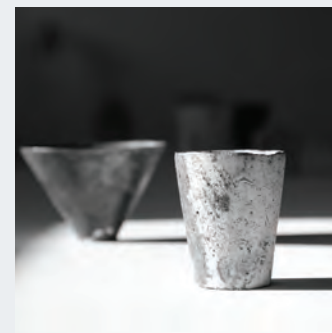
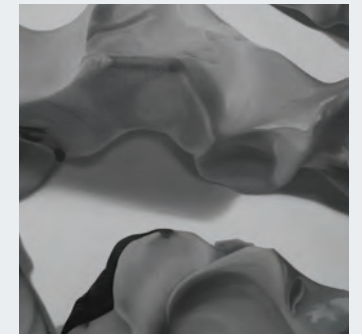
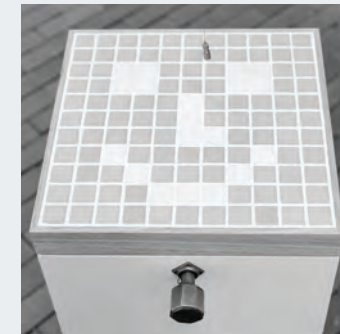
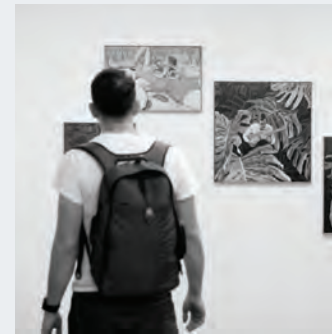
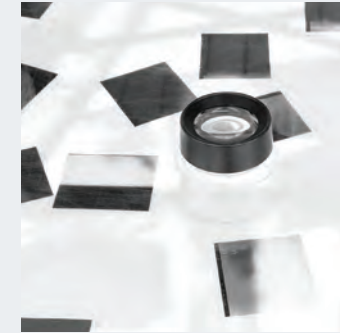
A total of 27,773 people visited c3 this year, an increase of 24% on last year's visitation.

To 3D photography and works by asylum-seeking artists at St Heliers...

The Convent's St Heliers Street Gallery delivered a year-round program of 12 exhibitions, seven artists' talks and three performances. Works by Convent-based artists and makers included industrial design by Eugenie Kawabata, 3D-enabled photographic portraits by Jacqueline Felstead, and queer art, photography and installations by Eureka, which featured in the Midsumma Festival program.

A highlight from the gallery program was working with Melbourne Artists for Asylum Seekers to feature works by 24 artists, including artists formerly detained at the Melbourne Immigration Transit Accommodation in Broadmeadows, exploring language, expression, identity and barriers.

Images feature works by the following artists, left to right, top to bottom: Alicia King; Laura Moore; Basil Papoutsidis; Lauren Dunn; Rowan Schwartz; Christine Ko; Brad Rusbridge; Lucas Golding; Amanda Marburg; Yoko Ozawa; Arini Byng; Leanne Failla.



Celebrating the Traditional Owners of the Land, the Wurundjeri People

“For us, the Wurundjeri people, the natural world is also a cultural world. We have a cultural duty to preserve and maintain our culture and cultural practices, cultural objects and heritage (both tangible and intangible).

As a traditional meeting place of our people, the site on which the Abbotsford Convent stands today is of great historical and cultural significance.

This site is enclosed in a natural amphitheatre which for millennia provided our people with a sheltered and resource-rich camping area, while the river flats and deep fresh water of the Birrarung were plentiful for hunting, fishing and eeling. The associated river lands were actively farmed for murnong, or yam daisy, one of our traditional staple root vegetables.

The nearby confluence of the Merri Creek and Birrarung at Dights Falls continues to be an important meeting place for our people. It's a place where we continue to actively practice our culture.

We proudly maintain our connection to the Convent site today, with our offices being based here.

The appointment of Collette Brennan as CEO of the Abbotsford Convent Foundation has witnessed a renewed and deeper relationship with the ACF, and together we are working on new ways to share our history, culture and heritage with all visitors to this important place.”

Statement from the Council

Pictured: Wurundjeri Elders, Ron Jones and Allan Wandin.



People

Creative Onsite Community

Creative Convent-based Community

The Convent's creative tenant community of more than 147 tenants and subtenants – comprising of artists, writers, creators, educators, makers, arts and cultural workers and wellbeing practitioners – is its lifeblood. We are committed to developing the Convent's reputation as an engine room of creativity, and our tenant community is key to this.

Showcasing talent

Our program includes platforms to showcase our tenant community, such as Open Spaces – which in 2016 saw 9,000 visitors onsite, meeting artists and makers and purchasing their works – and St Heliers Street Gallery, which this year featured eight Convent-based creatives, including Eureka, whose *Scarlatta* exhibition at the Convent featured in the Midsumma Festival program.

Fostering excellence

We strive to foster excellence, and this year saw 15 tenants recognised for prestigious awards nationally, including Jacqueline Felstead, awarded the Anne & Gordon Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship, and Bridget Nicholson who won the Yering Station Sculpture Exhibition and Award.

Our writers continued to excel; Tony Birch's *Ghost River* was awarded the 2016 Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Indigenous Writing; Micheline Lee's *The Healing Party* was shortlisted for the 2017 Victorian Premier's Literary Award; and Tony Wilson's *The Cow Tripped Over the Moon* was awarded the National Simultaneous Storytime title. Writers granted prestigious fellowships included Michelle Aung Thin who received the National Library of Australia Creative Arts Fellowship for Writing.

Convent-based artists featured in more than 26 exhibitions and festivals nationally, including: Eugenie Kawabata, whose work featured in *Departures* for Melbourne Design Week; Emily Floyd, whose *Icelandic Puffins* exhibited at Anna Schwartz Gallery;

and Mary Peacock, who featured in *Strata: Tracing the Past* at the Tasmanian Arts Festival.

Honouring our Indigenous past, present and future

The Convent is proudly home to the Wurundjeri Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council Aboriginal Corporation. Highlights with the Wurundjeri community included inviting Open Spaces visitors to join Uncle Colin Hunter Jnr. in creating a large-scale Indigenous mural, and hearing moving and motivational stories from Elders at Welcome to Country ceremonies. We were also honoured to celebrate, via a community event and tree planting, the passing of the historic Wilip-gin Birrarung murrong (Yarra River Protection Act), granting Wurundjeri people formal recognition and ownership of the Yarra River and lands by the State to protect its future.

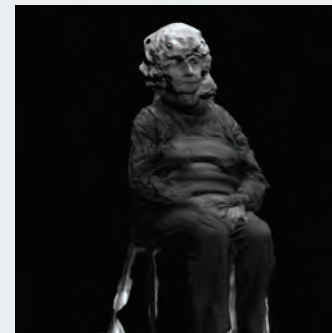
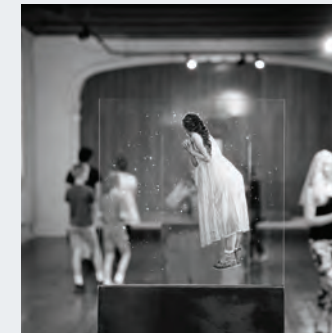
Celebrating 10 years of WellBeing

Our WellBeing practitioners play a key role in furthering the Convent's reputation as an inner-urban retreat, and 2017 marked the 10 year anniversary of WellBeing at the Convent. New upcoming promotions include a WellBeing Open Day.

Creating a collaborative community

We are committed to fostering collaboration, and this year based on tenant feedback we introduced PechaKucha nights, sparking cross-pollination and new conversations. With our annual tenant survey showing that 95% would recommend being a tenant to others, and 96% believe being based at the Convent impacts positively on their practice/business, we will continue to create a positive, creative and collaborative environment with our community.

Images from left to right, top to bottom: Asphyxia; Linda Oy Ho; Chris Womersley; Old School New School Typography; Jennifer Whitten *Fermatta Suite*; Eugenie Kawabata; Jacqueline Felstead photograph; Matthew Butler; Eureka *Scarlatta*; Mary Peacock; Iona Topolcsanyi; Osteopathy at WellBeing at the Convent.



Volunteer and Online Communities

Growing our valued volunteer community

From children's programs to gallery exhibitions, markets to musical performances, the Convent's volunteer community plays a critical role in helping to deliver year-round programs and events, as well as protecting our gardens and providing a welcoming face for thousands of visitors.

This year, 102 community volunteers (up 10%) donated 2,436 hours (up 12%) to the Convent, which according to Victorian government volunteer research, equates to an impressive \$66,868 worth of donated hours.

As much as we appreciate monetary value as a measure of impact, our volunteer impact goes far beyond this. We strive to provide a rewarding experience, offering personal and professional development, and creating a mutually beneficial experience for the many people who give their time to help the Convent grow and thrive for everyone to enjoy.

Helping our gardens grow

Every Wednesday, a dedicated group of volunteers donate their time to help protect, nurture and grow our gardens, from weeding and pruning, to watering and planting. With just two part-time staff dedicated to managing 6.8 hectares of grounds and gardens, the assistance of 20 gardening volunteers played a critical role in managing the Convent's gardens this year.

Sharing our history

The Convent draws on the expertise and knowledge of nine dedicated volunteer tour guides, who this year helped 834 visitors learn more about the Convent's social and architectural history and heritage. Our guides, including historians, academics and architects, play an invaluable role in developing our audiences.

Delivering year-round events

The Convent's arts and cultural events require significant assistance from volunteers. From greeting visitors at Open Spaces, to ushering audiences at Music in the Round, 63 volunteers helped deliver programming this year.

Gallery assistance and professional development

In addition to learning event management skills at opening night events, volunteers in the Convent's c3 Contemporary Art Space Volunteer Program are offered a range of professional development opportunities, including curatorial practice, installation and gallery administration. This year 10 volunteers took part in the program, donating 484 hours, and learning professional skills along the way.

Sharing skills

Via mentorships, internships and corporate volunteer programs, the Convent both assists volunteers in their professional development, and is itself assisted by skilled volunteers. This year the Convent hosted two work experience students and four interns, developing skills in arts management, program producing and marketing and communications, while 16 corporate volunteers donated 90 hours to assisting the Convent. A highly-skilled database volunteer also donated 60 hours to training Convent staff in advanced Salesforce management.

Online community

While thousands of audience members, visitors and volunteers engage with the Convent onsite each year, our online community is also an important focus. This year saw growth across the Convent's online and digital platforms, with Facebook followers up by 18%, Instagram followers up by 34% and e-news subscribers up by 15%. More than 500,000 people visited our website from all corners of the world, including the United States, India, Japan and France.

Pictured: Moyna Wilson – volunteer tour guide, gardening volunteer and Convent supporter.



Protecting Our Place With A Long-term Vision

“The success of the Convent far exceeds the initial expectations of the Abbotsford Convent Coalition, which fought to save the site from residential development, and certainly that of state and local government. Apart from the conservation and sympathetic re-use of so many buildings, what is most gratifying is how the Abbotsford Convent has now become such an accepted part of the life and culture of Melbourne.”

*Nigel Lewis, Heritage Architect and
Convent supporter*

Rotunda Restoration

Nigel Lewis was a key member of the Abbotsford Convent Coalition, which fought to save the Convent from residential development for a period of seven years, from 1997 to 2004. He was also instrumental in creating the vision for the Abbotsford Convent to become an arts, cultural and learning precinct.

Nigel has continued to play an important role in the preservation of the Abbotsford Convent, this year providing invaluable input into the restoration of the Convent’s historic rotunda, which will be restored thanks to public donations and funding from Victoria’s Heritage Restoration Fund, together with matched funding by our generous major partner the Copland Foundation.

Place



A Place to Meet

A place to convene, collaborate, share, shine... and quilt!

While the Convent is embarking on a new vision-led era of activation via programming and events, our arts, culture and learning remit remains at the heart of all we do.

The many people who choose to meet, convene, learn, plan, rehearse and perform at the Convent form a vital part of our community, bringing new and regular visitors to the Convent, and contributing to our long-term viability as a place for all to enjoy.

The Slow Food Farmers' Market (SFFM) is an outstanding example of a long-term Convent collaboration. Slow Food Melbourne took a leap of faith 12 years ago, coming to the Convent when the site was still largely derelict and relatively unknown to the wider community.

After two highly successful 'A Taste of Slow' festivals, the SFFM commenced in 2006, with 2016 marking the 10 year anniversary of the monthly market. Since then, more than 132 markets have been held onsite – rain, hail or shine – with local farmers and produce specialists sharing their good, clean, fair food with more 24,000 market-attendees in the last year alone.

Other long-term local groups which are part of our much-loved community include the Convent Quilters and the Sue Johnson Choir, meeting weekly at the Convent for the past nine and eight years respectively, and the Shamatha group, which has met monthly at the Convent for more than six years.

A place for personal and professional development

From singing, dancing and acting, to writing and weekend intensives, and from yoga and mindfulness, to language and laughter class, more than 11,000 people chose the Convent as a place to learn, relax and pursue their dreams and development in the last year, up 13% on the previous year.

A further 14,116 people from the corporate, government and not for profit sectors visited the Convent for 583 meetings, conferences and events (up 15%). All of our venue hirers play an invaluable role in supporting the Convent, and we will continue our focus on growing this business.

A place for centre stage moments (and the blood, sweat and tears behind them!)

Enjoying the Convent's unique, evocative spaces, 58 performances were held in the last year, attracting 2,000 audience members, from comedy by Tom Ballard, to works by the Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music. A highlight was hosting a number of outstanding artists to develop their work at the Convent, including international cabaret and theatre provocateurs Finucane & Smith ahead of their national tour, and celebrated choreographer and dancer, Luke George, developing new works to be delivered in Europe and the United States.

A place for coming off the catwalk

With its raw interiors, grand façades, lush gardens and new 'gold wall', the Convent is picture-perfect for film and photoshoots, inside and out. This year the Convent starred as a stunning backdrop to 70 shoots, including those by Lululemon Athletica, Jack London and Gorman and Elk in collaboration with Guide Dogs Victoria.

In total, this year saw more than 67,000 people visit the Convent for markets, exhibitions, weddings, development days, performances, rehearsals and workshops.

Tim Darbyshire *Tainted Title* work in progress.



Protecting Our Precious Place

Protecting our heritage grounds and gardens

The Convent's strategic priority of 'place' mandates the conservation and enhancement of the site's natural and built form to deliver a vibrant mix of cultural and community activities for everyone to enjoy.

Protecting our heritage gardens is critical to this strategic priority, and thanks to generous community support, the 2016 Keep it Green campaign raised vital funds to enable a number of sustainability initiatives including:

- Harvesting 2.5 million litres of rainwater for distribution across our central Heritage gardens
- Increasing plant biodiversity
- Enhancing irrigation channels
- Investing in additional resources, contracting a young gardener in training to assist our Head Gardener
- Increased LED lighting functionality in the Convent building.

The 2016 Keep it Green campaign highlighted the benefits of healthy gardens for our own community and wildlife, and the flow on effects of this, including sharing our prunings with Melbourne Zoo animals!

Rotunda restoration

Another highly successful fundraising campaign saw the Convent raise more than \$100,000 to restore our heritage-listed rotunda thanks to public donations and funding from Victoria's Heritage Restoration Fund, together with matched funding from our generous major partner, the Copland Foundation. This beautiful space – a place to rest, congregate and contemplate for more than 100 years – will once again become a place to enjoy the gardens, and experience arts and cultural programs. This restoration, which included input from renowned Heritage Architect and long-time Convent supporter, Nigel Lewis, will be completed in late spring 2017.

Solar success

Following our 2016 Solar Project campaign – Australia's largest successfully-crowdfunded solar project at the time – in June 2017 we installed a 98kW solar system, with 344 solar panels expected to save over 100 tonnes of emissions each year and reduce energy costs by more than \$15,000 annually. These savings will be invested in protecting our grounds and gardens, and future sustainability initiatives.

Sapling School development

With the support of our funding partner, The Hamer Sprout Fund, we further developed our Sapling School program, ensuring the program meets Early Learning curriculum needs. This program educates pre-school children on ecosystems and organic gardening, with children even planting their own beans at the Convent!

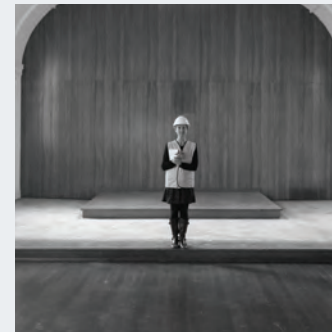
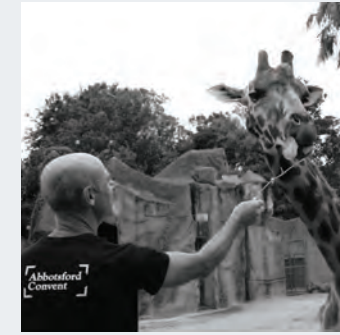
Capital works mark a major milestone

With the commencement of the Sacred Heart restoration – our biggest capital works project since restorations commenced more than a decade ago – and the announcement of funding to enable the Laundries restoration, this year marked a significant milestone for the Convent.

One of the last remaining buildings to restore, Sacred Heart is scheduled to open in March 2018, growing our onsite arts and cultural community, and contributing to our long-term growth and sustainability.

The Sacred Heart project was made possible following a grant of \$2.681 million from the Australian government, matching an extremely generous donation of \$2 million from the Dara Foundation, as well as funds raised by the Convent. Planning works for the Laundries restoration also commenced, following a \$2.7 million grant from the state government's \$30 million Living Heritage fund, announced in August 2016.

Images include: Laundries; Head Gardener Simon Taylor at Melbourne Zoo; Sacred Heart; Heritage Conservator Penny Byrne; Oratory; Heritage gardens; Solar Panels; Rotunda.



Abbotsford Convent Foundation Arts Trust

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 30 June 2017

	2017	2016
	\$	\$
REVENUE		
Donations – Cash	552,692	434,705
Grants Received	56,000	51,500
Interest Income	35,822	34,601
TOTAL REVENUE	644,514	520,806
EXPENDITURE		
Donations to Abbotsford Convent Foundation	78,000	96,946
Bank Charges and Fees	952	1,745
Commissions	–	1,386
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	78,952	100,077
SURPLUS BEFORE TAX	565,562	420,729
Income Tax Expense	–	–
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	565,562	420,729
Other Comprehensive Income	–	–
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE SURPLUS	565,562	420,729

Notes to Financial Statements

Abridged financial statements: These abridged financial statements are prepared from the full audited financial statements. The Abbotsford Convent Foundation (ACF) is constituted as a company limited by guarantee. The company owns and manages the property at Abbotsford. The company also acts as trustee of the Abbotsford Convent Foundation Arts Trust. The financial statements are prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and Corporations Act 2001. The statements are audited by Deloitte and lodged with the ACNC. The ACF has tax-exempt status and is the trustee of the Abbotsford Convent Foundation Arts Trust, which is a Deductible Gift Recipient listed on the Register of Cultural Organisations. Donations over \$2 to the Abbotsford Convent Foundation Arts Trust are tax deductible. A complete set of financial statements is published at abbotsfordconvent.com.au

Abbotsford Convent Foundation Arts Trust

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2017

	2017	2016
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	1,134,206	505,148
Term Deposit	1,315,317	1,361,081
Trade and Other Receivables	6,149	45,797
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	2,455,672	1,912,026
TOTAL ASSETS	2,455,672	1,912,026
LIABILITIES		
Trade and Other Payables	2,218	98
Prepaid Income	–	24,036
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	2,218	24,134
TOTAL LIABILITIES	2,218	24,134
NET ASSETS	2,453,454	1,887,892
Settlement Amount	100	100
Retained Income	2,453,354	1,887,792
TOTAL EQUITY	2,453,454	1,887,892

Abbotsford Convent Foundation

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the year ended 30 June 2017

	2017	2016
	\$	\$
OPERATING REVENUE		
Car Park Income	962,102	984,925
Events	117,889	140,209
Room Hire	595,647	551,473
Rental Income	1,440,328	1,407,548
Recoveries of Outgoings	91,215	73,885
Other Revenue	30,241	67,009
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	3,237,422	3,225,049
Interest Income	12,461	16,635
	3,249,883	3,241,684
OPERATING EXPENDITURE		
Administration	26,059	33,360
Advertising and Marketing	33,494	19,354
Bank Charges	4,610	7,274
Car Parking	189,895	96,319
Depreciation	551,100	539,081
Fundraising	11,232	10,162
Insurance	117,748	122,101
Programming	152,624	125,453
Rates and Taxes	62,099	64,818
Site Operating Costs	809,000	710,126
Staff and Employee Expenses	1,799,012	1,481,993
Other Expenses	92,661	123,925
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE	3,849,534	3,333,966
OPERATING (DEFICIT)	(599,651)	(92,282)
GRANTS, DONATIONS AND SPONSORSHIP		
Grant Income	1,139,000	14,152
Transfers from the ACF Arts Trust Fund	78,000	96,946
Donations	23,006	20,285
TOTAL GRANTS, DONATIONS & SPONSORSHIP	1,240,006	131,383
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	640,355	39,101
Surplus of the Year	640,355	39,101
Other Comprehensive Income	-	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE SURPLUS	640,355	39,101

Abbotsford Convent Foundation

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2017

	2017	2016
	\$	\$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	1,312,414	780,583
Term Deposits	211,293	-
Tenant Bond Deposits	247,824	252,752
Trade and Other Receivables	177,630	161,373
Prepayments	116,003	114,600
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	2,065,164	1,309,308
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Security Deposits	30,000	205,599
Property, Plant and Equipment	12,044,145	12,015,643
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	12,074,145	12,221,242
TOTAL ASSETS	14,139,309	13,530,550
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and Other Payables	475,299	428,763
Deferred Income	57,585	134,294
Rental Bonds and Deposits	248,809	253,026
Employee Benefits	146,502	153,414
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	928,195	969,497
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Employee Benefits	33,539	23,833
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	33,539	23,833
TOTAL LIABILITIES	961,734	993,330
NET ASSETS	13,177,575	12,537,220
Equity	13,177,575	12,537,220
TOTAL EQUITY	13,177,575	12,537,220

Supporters

The ACF acknowledges the vision of the Abbotsford Convent Coalition whose members worked for seven years to secure this public precinct. This success would not have been achieved without their commitment, and that of many others. Over the years, the Convent project has also been greatly assisted by a vast number of individuals and organisations who have contributed their time, energy, skills and financial support. The ACF is extremely grateful to all those who have provided support.

The ACF acknowledges the financial and philanthropic support of the following people and organisations who contributed to the ACF and the Abbotsford Convent Foundation Arts Trust in 2016/2017.

Principal Donors

Mrs Anne Kantor AO &
Dr Milan Kantor OAM
Mr David Laidlaw &
Mrs Megan Laidlaw
The late Glenda Lindsay
Mr Baillieu Myer AC &
Mrs Sarah Myer

Major Donors

Mr Ric Begg
Mrs Helen Brack
Mr Thomas Brophy
Ms Alison Duncan
Ms Rosina Gilder
Mr Peter Griffin AM &
Ms Terry Swann
Ms Diana Heggie
Prof. Andrea Hull AO
Mr Graeme Johnson OAM &
Mrs Joan Johnson
Ms Victoria Marles
Mr John McLeod &
Mrs Paula McLeod
Prof. Peter McPhee AM &
Ms Charlotte Allen
Ms Patricia O'Donnell
Ms Michelle Quigley QC
Ms Sally Romanes
Mr Phillip Schudmak &
Mrs Sue Schudmak
Mr Greg Shalit &
Ms Miriam Faine
Mr Mike Smith
Lady Southey AC
Ms Antonia Syme
Mrs Moyna Wilson

Key Supporters

Mr Marc Besen AC &
Mrs Eva Besen AO
Ms Collette Brennan
Mr Anthony Cullen
Mr David Gibbs
Mrs Jean Hedges
Mr Ronald Jones &
Ms Georgina Whitehead
Mr Peter Kelly
Mr Graeme McDonald
Mr Peter McMullin
Ms Maggie Maguire OAM
Mr Frederick Sim
Dr Bob Sullivan
Mr Michael Sokulski
Mrs Judy Williams &
Mr Peter Williams

Friends

Mr Robert Akeroyd
Mr David Baile
Ms Jade Barnaby
Mr Daniel Barnes
Ms Heather Barton
Mr Dan Brooks
Mr Brian Brophy &
Mrs Mary Brophy
Prof. Catherin Bull AM
Ms Sue Campbell
Mrs Suzy Chandler
Ms Suzanne Davies
Ms Sandie de Wolf AM
Mr Robert Dimattina
Mr John Di Natale
Mrs Nicky Dorevitch
Ms Anne Dowling
Mr Haydon Elliot &
Mr Greg Moses
Mr Andrew Evans
Mr Anthony Felettigh
Prof. David Forrest
Mrs Shirley Friedman

Mr Stephen Gow &
Mrs Mary Gow
Dr Joan Grant
Ms Meredith Greenwood &
Prof. Peter Rendell
Ms Roslyn Grundy
Mr J. Arnold Hancock OBE &
Mrs Pat Hancock
Ms Ria Harrison
Mrs Sheila Heys
Mr John Horacek
The Hon Brian Howe AO &
Mrs Renate Howe
Mr Chris Howlett
Ms Ruth Jones
Dr Stuart Kells &
Mrs Fiona Kells
Mr James Lesh
Ms Giovanna Luciani
Ms Helena McCallum
Ms Margaret McVey
Ms Judy Morton
Ms Alexandra Murphy
Mrs Lynette Payne
Mr Ian Renard AM &
Mrs Diana Renard
Mr Thomas Rendell
Ms Miriam Robinson
Ms Janey Runci
Ms Victoria Ryle &
Mr Simon Spain
Mr David Tomà
Ms Naomi Velaphi
Mr George Willcox

Corporate Partners

Aesop
Allens Linklaters
Deloitte
Egon Zehnder
PwC
Studio Round
Williams Boag architects

Corporate Supporters

Art Guide Australia
The Bennett Group
Colour Factory
Corporate AV
Folk Architects
Gunn & Taylor Printers
Medibank Community Fund
NAB
Salesforce Foundation

Event Partners

3MBS Fine Music Radio
Bursaria Fine Foods
Convent Bakery
Kawai
Morningson Peninsula Brewery
Terrace Gardens Florist

Trusts & Foundations

Principal Partner

The Dara Foundation

Supporting Partners

The Angior Family Foundation
The Copland Foundation
Hamer Sprout Fund (a sub-fund of the Australian Communities Foundation)
The Henkell Family Fund (a sub-fund of the Australian Communities Foundation)
The Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
The McLeod Family Foundation
Sisters of the Good Shepherd
Victoria's Heritage Restoration Fund

Principal Government Partners

Australian Government
Department of Infrastructure:
National Stronger Regions Fund
Victorian Government Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning: Living Heritage Fund

Government Supporters

Creative Victoria
Australian Government
Department of Infrastructure & Regional Development: Stronger Communities Programme
City of Yarra

Board and Team

Board

Victoria Marles, Chair
Charlotte Allen, Co-Deputy Chair
David Laidlaw, Co-Deputy Chair
Diana Heggie (appointed 16/10/2016)
Ronald Jones
Ruth Jones (appointed 1/07/2016)
Stuart Kells
Patricia O'Donnell (until 17/10/2016)
Sally Romanes
Michael Smith (until 17/10/2016)
Michael Sokulski
Antonia Syme
Elizabeth Ward-Christie
Judy Williams

Team

Executive:

Chief Executive Officer: Collette Brennan (appointed 24/8/2016), Maggie Maguire OAM (until 4/09/2016)
Chief Operating Officer: John Di Natale

Administration:

Accounts Manager: Tibo Lazennec (appointed 20/03/2017), Anthony Felettigh (until 6/01/2017)
Assistant Accountant (P/T): Theresa Bernstein
Governance & Operations Officer: Thomas Rendell
Administrator: Madeleine Dorevitch
Salesforce Administrator (P/T): Justin Butler

Buildings & Facilities:

Buildings & Facilities Manager: John Mummery (outgoing), David Campbell (appointed 26/6/2017)
Facilities Coordinator: David Tomà (from 1/08/2016 until 31/3/2017), Govin Ruben (appointed 3/04/2017 until 30/06/2017)
Head Gardener (P/T): Simon Taylor
Gardener (P/T): Joanne Bechaz
Site Coordinators (P/T): Paul Blakeney, Jonathan Carmichael (until 3/01/2017), Jason Currie (until 14/12/2016), Reg Gaudon, Jack Hall, Milad Nematy (appointed 20/3/2017), Paul Niklas, Carl Turney

Marketing and Communications:

Director Strategic Projects, Marketing and Communications: Brooke Daly (appointed 1/08/2016), Communications Coordinator (P/T): Jean Kemshal-Bell (until 15/7/2016), Meg Crozier (from 8/08/2016 until 11/11/2016), Huw Cushing (appointed 9/1/2017)

Development and Fundraising:

Head of Development: Alexandra Murphy
Development Coordinator (P/T): Emily Boyle

Programming:

Producer: Chloe Weavers
c3 Contemporary Art Space
Director: Jon Butt
c3 Contemporary Art Space
Gallery Manager (P/T): Katie Paine (appointed 21/11/2016)
Production & Events Assistant (P/T): Jonathan Carmichael (until 3/01/2017)

Tenancy:

Tenancy & Studio Manager: Felicity Mark
Studio & Leasing Coordinator (P/T): Catriona Black-Dinham

Venue Hire:

Venues Manager: Leonie Wray
Venue Hire Coordinator: Renee Daniele, Michael Williamson (until 7/10/2016)
Tenancy Administrator (P/T): Maria Coviello

Volunteers

Volunteers:

Judith Allen
Sophie Aloni Tapia
Daniela A'valos
Jade Barnaby
Doug Beecroft
Janet Bennett
Peter Bennett
Skye Bennett
Megan Bonny
Chris Bowes
Susie Brown
Michelle Buzza
Naomi Callander
Brendan Cameron
Grace Cheng
Chihyu Chou
Lydia Connolly-Hiatt
Siobhan Cooney-O'Donoghue
Olivia Corby
Marie-Claire Courtin
Anna Cuttance
Paul Davenport
Sandra Del Monaco
Peter Dunn
Lara Dykun
Jane Edwards
Mikaela Fisher
Madonna Grehan
Tina Hehir
Claire Hetzel
Jourdan Hickey
Mathew Hluchanic
Vicki Ho
Sharni Jansen
Rachel King
Delphine Laboureaux-Ormancey
Shuo Lacey
Sally Ann Lawford
Sarah Nicole Lee
Hui Li
Lincoln Li
Sofia Lo Bianco

Jacinta Lombardozi
Heather Loomes
Jessica Luu
Harriet Maher
Natasha Manners
Clara Marcus
Marg McCormack
Marg McVey
Josephine Mead
Clare Millar
Luke Millar
Sarah Misev
Jordan Mitchell-Fletcher
Curtis Moon
Brigid Moriarty
Alison Murphy
Hannah Murphy
Darren Naftal
Andrew Nguyen
Rema O'Neill
Tenieka Page
Mary Peacock
Sarah Petryszyn
Francesca Pezzimenti
Genevieve Piko
Diva Poodle
John Price
Sophie Rennie
Nicole Robertson
Melissa Rodriguez
Clive Rumney
Carly Russell
Ailsa Salt
Kirra Scotland
Yolanda Shaw
Josephine Sim
David Simpson
Bernadette Smedley
Francesca Smith
Adil Soh-Lim
Julian Stow
Parisa Taheri
Sara Tajima

Belinda Teh
Camille Thomas
Winnie Tjahjana
Thao Trinh
Flora Wang
Sissi Wang
Xueyuan Wang
Bruce Ward
Ronyln Wells
Grace Wescott-Dawson
Yoko Whyte
George Willox
Alfred Wilson
Moyna Wilson
Kara Young
Rima Yourim Lee
Peter Zeidler

Thank You

Your Support Sustains Our Success

The Abbotsford Convent is owned and operated by a for-purpose, not-for-profit organisation – the Abbotsford Convent Foundation (ACF) – which manages the precinct on behalf of the community.

The ACF does not receive any recurrent government funding, and relies on the support of the community to ensure the Convent remains open, safe and accessible to everyone, 365 days of the year.

If you enjoy your experiences at the Convent, and feel a connection with this incredible community asset, please consider joining our growing community of supporters and making a donation today.

Your generosity is an investment in the Convent's future – helping to support site-wide sustainability initiatives, maintain and protect the Convent's precious heritage buildings and its invaluable green open space, and bringing the precinct to life each year with a range of arts and cultural programming.

We are passionate about community connectedness, and providing an urban oasis of arts, cultural, learning and wellbeing initiatives – all year round. However, we need your support to do this.

It took a strong community of supporters to save the Convent from commercial development more than 13 years ago. It takes a united community of supporters to help keep the Convent alive and well today – for everyone to enjoy.

Your personal support will make an important and significant impact. Thank you for being a part of the Convent community today, and for contributing to its future.

