

Last year I reported that after a number of years of soul searching and detailed analysis of different operating models we had begun to initiate some changes in order to secure our financial future. This work is ongoing as reported in this Annual Report. I have been heartened by the support of so many people, as, like all cultural institutions, we have had to review and adjust the way we go about our business to remain relevant and viable. But at the core of it all we continue to honour the great legacy of William Johnston and strive to fulfil his wishes.

Trustees

All associated with TJC were saddened to hear of the death of Tom Hazell AO during the year. Tom had been a Trustee for longer than most could remember. He was able to provide background information on almost any important issue. He had been instrumental in setting up the arrangement with Government House that allowed TJC to store its reserve collection at Government House in return for providing items of important furniture for both the State rooms and private apartments at Government House. His long association with TJC will be greatly missed.

We were delighted to welcome Judy Williams, Jane Scott and Geoffrey Edwards as new Trustees. All three had had some association with TJC and between them they bring a wealth of knowledge, skills and experience of the cultural and philanthropic sectors in Victoria. This will be critical in guiding TJC into the future.

Honorary Treasurer

We were very sorry to lose the services of Joe Groher who left to live in Queensland. Joe had given TJC great service for the past five or so years, especially as we explored different operating models in an endeavour to improve income and reduce the annual deficit. His contribution to TJC over that time has been enormous and he is a huge loss to the organisation.



Ambassadors

We were very pleased to appoint Robyn Ives as an Ambassador during the year. For many years we have relied on Robyn's advice to enhance the porcelain collection and it was fitting that this was formally recognised by appointing Robyn to this honorary and advisory position.

Accreditation

The Director and staff continued to pursue accreditation of TJC under the Museum Accreditation Program. To achieve accreditation TJC needs to operate at a high professional standard in all that it does. This has required the development of numerous policies and procedures. In particular this year a comprehensive Collections Plan and Acquisitions Policy were adopted.

Business Planning

After a great deal of discussion in the past few years the Trustees adopted a Business Plan 2018-22. This provides TJC with a clear direction and will allow the Trustees to monitor progress against an agreed set of goals.

As part of this process the Trustees spent considerable time exploring ways in which to reduce the operating deficit and improve income. As part of this process it was agreed that making TJC available for weekend visitors would go a long way to improving access to the property and improving income. We know from other cultural institutions that weekends are the most popular times for visitors. Opening TJC on weekends sounds simple but will require a change to our planning permit in the first instant and we have begun to pursue this in preparation for making an application to the City of Melbourne.

Publications

We were pleased to be able to support the development and launch of *A Tear in the Glass | A Life of Objects* which was started by the previous Director, Nina Stanton, and completed by Mary Ryllis Clark. Nina's generous bequest to TJC continues to be used for the acquisition of porcelain for the collection. The book was launched at TJC on 31 July 2018.



Finance

The TJC Balance Sheet remains very strong. However the Trustees remain committed to reducing the annual deficit so as to ensure the long term sustainability of the institution. Whilst the net deficit this year of \$143,483 was within our operating budget it remains higher than we would like and we have, over the past few years, adopted a number of strategies to reduce the deficit. These include reducing the number of changing exhibitions, fundraising, closing the gallery in 150 Hotham Street and leasing the property for residential use, improving the technology especially in relation to bookings to free staff time for other work and deleting the position of Assistant Curator.

Fundraising

Fundraising remains an important and growing part of our activities to ensure our long term sustainability. As part of this it is important that we increase our profile in the philanthropic community and work in this area has continued. Recognition through awards, programming and collaboration with others are amongst the ways we have pursued this goal. This will take time but we remain confident that we are already improving our profile in the relevant places. The Fundraising Committee, under the leadership of Lisa Arrowsmith, has managed fundraising events and the annual appeal and we are grateful to all those who have supported us.

Thanks

TJC has many exceptional qualities. For me the most important is the passion and enthusiasm given by so many people who support what we do – volunteers, The Friends of The Johnston Collection, Ambassadors, the Fundraising Committee, staff and my fellow Trustees amongst many others. It gives TJC a very special character and I thank everyone for their contribution. Without you we would not be able to achieve what we do. I pay a special tribute to our Director, Louis le Vaillant, who is the glue that sticks together so much of what we do.

Peter Watts AM

