



**Friends of The Astor Association Inc.**  
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## **A message from Vanda Hamilton, president of Friends of The Astor**

As president of Friends of The Astor, I am probably more passionate than most about this wonderful institution. And when we launched this campaign, we knew there were many more people out there who shared that passion.

But over the last four days we have been overwhelmed, quite literally, by how many of you in Melbourne, Australia, and right around the world, are prepared to stand up and be counted in support of The Astor.

We launched our online petition on last Wednesday lunchtime, and since then we've been awed at how quickly it has grown – 5000 in the first 24 hours alone; and today we clicked over to 10,000. This makes it one of the fastest growing Australian petitions ever hosted by Change.org. Take a bow people.

We are elated at the success of the petition, which sends a strong message to the board of St Michael's Grammar School. But we are realistic in our idealism. This is the start of the battle, not the end.

We want St Michael's Grammar School to relinquish the site, and return it to the people who love it, so that it can continue its historic purpose as a cinema. We say that The Astor is too precious to be redeveloped as a private performing arts centre and uniform shop.

To safeguard The Astor for all time we need to set up a trust and raise up to \$5 million to acquire the building. We have no illusions about just how challenging it will be to realise this dream.

While we know we have the legal and technical resources to achieve this, we cannot do it without all of you, those people who love and value The Astor, at our side.

I hope you will turn out in force for the launch of the Protect The Astor campaign on 16 June where you can roll a Jaffa, pat Marzipan the cat, enjoy a free movie and popcorn and show how much you value The Astor.

You can also show your support by joining Friends of The Astor. Through the sheer weight of our numbers, and the depth of our passion for the Astor, I am confident that we can win this fight.

The Astor thanks you for your support.

**Vanda Hamilton**  
**Friends of The Astor**  
**21 May 2012**