

8th December 2011

Patsy Payne
Head of Printmedia and Drawing

School of Art

Canberra ACT 0200 Australia
www.anu.edu.au

CRICOS Provider No. 00120C

Submission to:

**ACT Legislative Assembly Inquiry
Into the future use of the Fitters' Workshop in the Kingston Arts Precinct**

As both a member of the Megalo Board and the Head of the Printmedia and Drawing workshop at the School of Art ANU I make a submission to the Inquiry to express my dismay at the postponement of the Fitters workshop project. I re-iterate my unmitigated support for the appropriate refurbishment of the Fitters Workshop to become the new permanent base of Megalo Print Studio and Gallery.

There have been a series of submissions made by individuals and organizations over the lengthy 3 year process of consultation in regard to the best use of the Fitters Workshop. The proposal for Megalo to use the Fitters Workshop was proposed, discussed, debated, and agreed upon. In April 2011 funding for the refurbishment of the Fitters Workshop to suit Megalo was announced by the ACT government.

The announcement by the government triggered a vitriolic campaign by a sector of choral musicians in the ACT. A good decision by the government after consultation, scoping studies and budget analysis is now under threat as an outcome of the loud voices of a relatively small number of individuals. In such a small city as Canberra it is very hard to keep personal connections separate from public duty and the need for objectivity. At this point I would like to stress the necessity of objectivity in considering the best use of the Fitters Workshop and in fact the way that the Kingston Visual Arts Precinct takes form.

I am writing to express my strong support for the ACT government's decision to allocate a budget for the design and renovation required to transform the former Fitter's Workshop located on Printers Way at Kingston as the new home for Megalo Print Studio and Gallery. The venue is ideal for a print workshop having formerly been a machinery fitting workshop with the structure and flooring appropriate to Megalo's heavy studio equipment. I believe the ACT government has made a good and thoughtful decision based on the range of submissions and points of view that have been presented to it.

Megalo has a long history as an active and accessible facility with a diverse workshop teaching program and a well deserved reputation for experienced and innovative staff able to communicate with all sectors of their interested public: from children through community groups to professional artists with specific print projects to be co-ordinated. As a tertiary educator it has been gratifying to see the talented graduates from the School of Art, ANU take up a range of opportunities provided by Megalo, including emerging artist studio residencies, exhibitions, teaching and technical training opportunities.

Moving to the Kingston site brings Megalo into the heart of Canberra cultural life and opens up opportunities for new audiences for its wide range of activities. A neighbourhood that includes the Canberra Glassworks and Megalo will offer many opportunities for audiences and artists alike. Megalo has been able to reconsider the varied functions of the studio in order to relocate and maximise this wonderful new venue. The architects have drawn up the plans for the studios and gallery and have been able to enhance the beauty, volume and light of the building to create an ambient space for both production and display of prints.

Megalo has been a springboard for many productive careers in the visual arts and this decision to relocate Megalo Print Studio and Gallery to the former Fitters workshop at Kingston foreshore helps to ensure its future capacity to continue with these opportunities.

Sincerely

Patsy Payne

Associate Professor
Head of Printmedia and Drawing
School of Art
ANU