

From: Miriam Kelly
Sent: Friday, 9 December 2011 11:22 AM
To: Committees
Cc: HANSON; BRESNAN; BOURKE
Subject: submission in response to the 'Inquiry into the future use of the Fitters' Workshop in the Kingston Arts Precinct'

08 December 2011

Amanda Bresnan MLA, Jeremy Hanson CSC MLA and Chris Bourke MLA
Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs
Legislative Assembly for the ACT
GPO Box 1020
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Amanda Bresnan MLA, Jeremy Hanson CSC MLA and Chris Bourke MLA

In support of Megalo Print Studio and Gallery at the Fitters Workshop; a permanent, available and appropriate home for this workshop in the Kingston Arts Precinct

I am writing to say how very disappointed I am by the current Inquiry into the future use of the Fitters' Workshop in the Kingston Arts Precinct', and the position against the ACT Government's decision to fully commit the Fitters Workshop to Megalo Print Studio and Gallery. That is a decision to help Canberra build for a world-class fine art print-making facility. I am writing in response to this Inquiry, to request that you act now to keep the plans for Megalo at the Fitters Workshop on track!

Megalo's tenancy of the Fitters Workshop will bring active daily use to the building, respecting its heritage as a workshop and place of physical work. This is a truly great decision for Canberra's future as our city continues to grow and develop this high profile precinct as a popular cultural destination.

Megalo is a dynamic and creative member-based visual arts organisation that has been a crucial part of the ACT arts scene since 1980. Megalo provides artists and the broader community with access to specialised art printmaking facilities and expertise in etching, lithography, relief printing, and screenprinting for both fabric and paper. Megalo fosters contemporary arts practice in both fine arts and the community arts sector, providing access, excellence and innovation in printmaking in range of print-based artistic programs. It has a significant national and growing international reputation, running a highly regarded guest artist program. Nationally and internationally recognised local artists and depend upon the Megalo facilities and many interstate and international artists travel to Canberra to access Megalo. However, Megalo is currently located in an out-of-the-way and expensive location in Watson.

As you will be aware, the decision to relocate Megalo Print Studio and Gallery to the Fitters Workshop site is the result of due process undertaken by Megalo and the ACT Government since 2008. In keeping with consultation on the future of the arts in the Kingston precinct, with visual arts being identified as a priority, in 2008 Megalo lodged an Expression of Interest with the ACT Government outlining their design and rationale for tenancy of the Fitters Workshop.

Megalo is an established and viable organisation. In 2009 Megalo developed a five-year Business Plan, from 2010 to 2014, *clearly* outlining the benefits of relocating to the Fitters Workshop. This includes a Financial Management Plan indicating that Megalo has the capacity to capitalise on relocation to a high profile precinct.

You will be aware of the ACT Government's scoping study in 2009 that identified Megalo Print Studio and Gallery as a good fit for the Fitters Workshop. The study clearly indicated that Megalo's tenancy will enliven this precinct. It highlighted that that the building was suitable for Megalo's activities. It also identified that the opportunities for collaboration with the Canberra Glassworks, and the National Gallery of Australia were a significant plus for this growing precinct.

On the basis of these rational and considered, open and professional measures undertaken by Megalo and the Government, it was decided to award Megalo tenancy of the building. The ACT Government committed funds in the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 budgets. This is a truly positive and outstanding opportunity to strengthen Canberra's future as a cultural destination.

Please act to keep the Plans for Megalo at the Fitters Workshop on track.

A vibrant popular printmaking workshop on Printers Way – it is a perfect fit for the Fitters!

Yours sincerely

Miriam Kelly
Volunteer Secretary, Megalo Advisory Board
and
Assistant Curator, Australian Painting and Sculpture
National Gallery of Australia