

Submission to the Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs

ACT Legislative Assembly

**Inquiry into
Fitters' Workshop, Kingston Arts Precinct - Future Use**

The Secretary
Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs
Inquiry into the Future Use of Fitters Workshop, Kingston Arts Precinct
(via email: committees@parliament.act.gov.au)

I submit the following observations in support of Megalo Print Studio+Gallery's tenancy in Fitters Workshop for your consideration. I am a Canberra resident, professional arts practitioner/printmaker and musician.

General Comments

In selecting Megalo Print Studio+Gallery to occupy a redeveloped Fitters Workshop in the Kingston Arts Precinct and allocating a 2010/11 capital works budget of \$3.8m to this end, the ACT government acknowledged the 30-year contribution to Canberra cultural richness and diversity of this outstanding, high achieving, national/internationally active local arts organisation.

Megalo is the only workshop in Australia to house all the major print disciplines under one roof and provides a multitude of associated activities both to the general public (of all ages) and artists at all stages of their practice from beginners to emerging, graduated and renowned professional practitioners from around Australia and the world.

Throughout its long history as Canberra's centre for community and professional access to printmaking, Megalo has never had a permanent, purpose-suited home.

The art of printmaking is a natural fit alongside the Canberra Glassworks and Sunday Bus Depot markets, and will create the necessary critical mass to attract increasing numbers of visitors (both active and passive) into the area. Megalo also has strong professional connections with the nearby National Gallery of Australia, the Portrait Gallery, Old Parliament House and National Archives - to name just a few - as well as numerous nearby commercial art galleries.

Another key ingredient in Megalo's favour which should not be under-estimated, is the fact that it operates on a daily basis. No arts precinct can flourish, or indeed survive in the long-term, if daily activities and attractions are not on offer to the public.

Acoustic Qualities of the Fitters Workshop

It is well-known and broadly accepted that:

- acoustic qualities are *subjectively* perceived by musicians and audiences alike;
- will vary within any given space depending on where a performer or listener stands/sits;
- any acoustic qualities existing in a building prior to redevelopment will not exist in the same way after internal modifications have been undertaken.

It follows that if the present inquiry considers Megalo an unsuitable tenant because one section of the local music community has deemed the ‘miraculous’ acoustic qualities resonating and reverberating within the bare, unmodified Fitters Workshop must be preserved forever and for them, then a serious error of judgment and failure in objective, intelligent decision-making, will have occurred.

I trust the members of this Standing Committee will rise above the unworthy 11th hour attempt to grab the Fitters Workshop away from Megalo Print Studio+Gallery and have it turned into yet another concert and performance venue of which there is no shortage across the length and breadth of Canberra (and nearby Queanbeyan).

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Ulli Brunnschweiler

Arts Practitioner