

**FOR THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION,
TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS**

**ACT GOVERNMENT SUBMISSION TO THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH
AFFAIRS INQUIRY INTO THE FITTERS' WORKSHOP**

**Presented by
Ms Joy Burch, Minister for the Arts
December 2011**

ACT Government Submission

Mrs Dunne, pursuant to notice, moved—That this Assembly:

(4) refers to the Standing Committee on Education, Training and Youth Affairs for inquiry and report to the Assembly by March 2012:

(5) the best use of the Fitters' Workshop, taking into account the acoustic qualities, heritage value, its location, cost and community demand of the building;

Acoustic Qualities

To date there has been no acoustic testing undertaken in the Fitters' Workshop building. artsACT are able to source specifications for acoustic standards to assist the Inquiry. The recently commissioned, and highly regarded, Larry Sitsky Recital Room at the Australian National University (ANU) School of Music will provide a useful standard for comparison.

Heritage Values

A Heritage Conservation Management Plan (CMP) was commissioned by the former Department of Land and Property Services (now Economic Development Directorate) from Duncan Marshall, Heritage Architect. This CMP has been accepted by the ACT Heritage Council. This CMP provides a framework and guidelines for consideration in preserving the building and any future building modifications.

Location

The Fitters' Workshop is a significant building within the context of the Kingston Foreshore. This is clearly articulated within the Fitters' Workshop CMP. The Land Development Agency (LDA) currently has jurisdiction over the greater area known as Section 49. This includes the proposed Kingston Arts Precinct encompassing the Canberra Glassworks, Fitters' Workshop and the Former Transport Depot, as well as all of the undeveloped land bordered by Wentworth Avenue, Eastlake Parade, Giles Street and Lake Burley Griffin.

In 2010-11, artsACT commissioned cultural planner Susan Conroy to undertake a study leading to the development of the Kingston Arts Precinct Strategy. The Conroy Report followed earlier work undertaken by artsACT in 2003 that identified the Kingston Precinct as a visual arts precinct for key arts organisations in the ACT. The first implementation stage of this cultural precinct development was the establishment of the Canberra Glassworks in the Kingston Power House in 2006-07. The Conroy Report identified a number of arts organisations that would be appropriate to locate in an arts hub at Kingston, as well as associated creative industries that would add to the vibrancy of the site. The Conroy Report also recommended a number of actions to resolve master planning issues on the precinct, as well as options for management structures and operational issues.

The LDA are currently undertaking a master planning exercise to determine the best use of Section 49 Kingston to achieve good economic, cultural and social outcomes for the Territory. The LDA have engaged Purdon and Associates to undertake this master planning exercise which has seen extensive community consultation workshops, public consultations at the Old Bus Depot Markets and selected industry and focus groups. The LDA are scheduled to provide the Section 49 Master Plan to the Assembly in December 2011.

Cost

There are a number of elements that will need to be considered in relation to cost:

- Capital cost to respond to any upgrade needs at the Fitters' Workshop for public use, including any 'core equipment' that may be needed (eg. power connection, safety, security, access requirements etc.). This work would need to be undertaken with regard to the recommendations of the Heritage CMP and would need to consider all matters for use as a Place of Public Entertainment should a use other than for Megalo Print Studio and Gallery be contemplated.
- Venue Hire and Management: If the Fitters' Workshop were to be used as a venue for hire, appropriate facility rental and associated management costs will need to be considered. A study has recently been completed by the Economic Development Directorate on management and operational usage of the Albert Hall. The Economic Development Directorate commissioned Elton's Consulting Group who undertook extensive community consultation to provide recommendations for consideration on a range of related issues.
- If the Fitters' Workshop was to be considered as a venue and Place of Public Entertainment, the following regulatory issues would need to be addressed, as the existing building has no regulatory approvals in place at the moment:
 - Australian Performing Rights Association licensing: The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (TAMS) manages this on behalf of the venue and each event presenter or producer would be legally responsible for conforming to licensing and fee payments.
 - Public Liability Insurance (PLI): The Territory would need to ensure that all hirers or users of the facility were able to provide evidence of PLI. ACT Insurance Authority (ACTIA) do not cover hirers of the venues, and hirers must obtain PLI for themselves. PLI can be expensive to purchase and may be difficult for one-off cover; however, there are schemes that can enable associations to provide umbrella cover for associated members.
 - Liquor Licensing: If required, individual hirers need to apply for special one-off licences in order to sell alcohol. There are associated venue facility requirements that will need to be provided in order to be authorised a liquor licence.
 - Fire regulations and standards: Any work undertaken to enable the building to be used as a Place of Public Entertainment would be subject to a Building Approval which would require that these issues were addressed. It would be necessary to engage a specialist consultant to assess maximum capacity and

safety requirements such as exits and fire detection systems. Any recommendations for adapting the building to become a Place of Public Entertainment would also need to be undertaken with regard to the Heritage CMP.

Community Demand

- Heritage: The Heritage values of the Fitters' Workshop have been widely applauded across the Canberra community and evidenced in the Heritage CMP by Duncan Marshall. It is important that any proposed use of the Fitters' Workshop be undertaken with regard to the Heritage CMP and the community value of this building within the context of the Kingston arts and heritage precinct.
- To date there has been representation for use of the Fitters' Workshop by elements of the community music fraternity in Canberra. These groups were able to access the Fitters' Workshop during the Canberra International Music Festival when there was no venue rental fee and regulatory standards were not required due to the temporary nature of use. It will be necessary to test the community demand for the facility following research into the regulatory framework that will now need to be adhered to. This will inform the audience capacity, Places of Public Entertainment regulations and the provision of public amenities, as well as appropriate venue rental and management costs.
- The venue has also been used in recent years for one-off launches and exhibitions on an ad hoc basis.

(6) options for alternative venues for use by a range of community music groups;

The Territory has recently completed capital upgrades to the Albert Hall in order to restore this performance venue. Many community groups use the Albert Hall, including the Canberra International Music Festival, Cultural Missions, local choirs and instrumental groups, and from Sydney, the Song Company - one of Australia's premier a cappella ensembles. The Albert Hall is a major venue for music presentation in Canberra and has been the principle venue for the Canberra International Music Festival for many festivals.

There are a number of venues for community music presentation in Canberra. The Canberra International Music Festival in recent years has presented interesting music in public venues as varied as Old and New Parliament House, the High Court, Embassies, Cathedrals and on Mount Ainslie. The recently commissioned Larry Sitsky Recital Room at the ANU and the recently promoted performance space at the Ainslie Arts Centre, the James Ainslie Recital Hall, provide new options for venues for the presentation of community music.

artsACT has provided funding through the ACT Arts Fund for many music groups and individuals to present performances in a number of venues in Canberra. Below is a list of venues where ACT Arts Fund supported music has been presented over the past three years:

- Tuggeranong Arts Centre
- Belconnen Arts Centre
- Street Theatre
- Llewellyn Hall
- The Canberra Theatre Centre (The Canberra Theatre, The Playhouse)
- Albert Hall
- Ainslie Arts Centre
- National Library of Australia
- National Gallery of Australia (Fairfax Theatre, Gandel Hall)
- Parliament House (Great Hall, reception foyer)
- Old Parliament House
- National Museum of Australia
- CSIRO Discovery Centre
- Belconnen Community Centre
- Gorman House Arts Centre
- Wesley Music Centre
- Centre for Christianity
- All Saints Church and Hall
- St Christopher's Cathedral
- St Pauls Church
- Lyneham Hall
- Erindale Theatre
- Calwell High School
- Canberra Girls Grammar School
- Canberra Boys Grammar School
- Cook Community Hall
- Corroboree Park Hall
- The Gods Cafe
- University House
- The ANU Arts Centre
- Merry Muse, Turner Bowling Club
- Polish Community Club, Lyneham
- The Green Room, Erindale
- Canberra International Music Festival: various Embassies, the High Court of Australia, Mount Ainslie and others
- The Q Theatre, Queanbeyan
- Phoenix Bar
- Transit Bar
- Hippo Bar
- Exhibition Park in Canberra

Below are other venues identified with the presentation of music performances:

- Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) Arena
- Royal Theatre
- Major Community Clubs (Southern Cross, Vikings, Hellenic, Labor, Irish, Italian)
- Tilleys
- The Front
- Pot Belly
- Uni Bar
- University of Canberra
- Old Canberra Inn
- Community/Youth Centres
- Darramalan College

(7) options for alternative purpose built accommodation for Megalo Print Studio; and

Megalo Print Studio and Gallery have consistently presented a case to government to re-locate to the Fitters' Workshop. Following the government decision to re-locate Megalo to the Fitters' Workshop, consultants have been engaged to undertake design options for the relocation to the Fitters' Workshop.

As part of the consultation process undertaken by Purdons and the Master Plan prepared by Cox Architects an alternative building site and indicative plan for Megalo Print has been prepared. The Government is currently awaiting resolution of the Development application, approval of a Contamination Management Plan and for further information on an underground fuel storage tank.

(8) any other relevant matter;

In 2010, the Territory through artsACT commissioned cultural planner Susan Conroy to research and develop the Kingston Arts Precinct Strategy. This Report was released by Government in July 2011. Additional work has been commissioned for the Territory through the LDA to create a Master Plan for Section 49 of the Kingston Foreshore site. This work is currently underway by independent consultants Purdon and Associates and is due to be presented to the Assembly in December 2011.

The Territory is also working with the Canberra Glassworks and the caterer Brodburger to re-locate Brodburger to the Canberra Glassworks Cafe . This project is due for building completion in December 2012.

(9) resolves that funds be provided by the Parliament to permit the engagement of external expertise to work with the Committee to assist in the preparation of the report of the Committee; and

(10) calls on the Government to:

(11) suspend the capital works project until the Standing Committee has

reported, the Government has responded and the Assembly has noted the Government's response; and

No further work on the conversion of the Fitters' Workshop Directorate has been undertaken by the Community Services since 31 October 2011.

(12) ensure that adequate temporary accommodation is provided to the Megalo Print Studio until permanent accommodation has been provided.

artsACT has advised Megalo Print Studio and Gallery to approach their current landlord to extend their existing rental arrangement till December 2012 and then to pursue on a month by month basis. To date, advice on their success has not been provided.

Megalo Print Studio and Gallery have worked with a number of Departments and Directorates of the Territory in good faith over a number of years in order to pursue the advice given to them in 2009 that they would be re-located to the Fitters' Workshop.

In 2009, they proffered considerable cooperation with artsACT in order to meet and negotiate with architects to identify their business needs and functional requirements. Following this in 2010-11, they worked with the former Department of Land and Property Services to further develop their functional requirements with newly appointed architects commissioned to undertake final sketch plans leading to the lodgement of a Development Application for construction to commence.

During this time they have also been involved in considerable consultation locally and within a broader community context with Cultural Planners and Town Planners over the development of the Kingston Arts Precinct.