

From: Natasha Fijn
Sent: Wednesday, 7 December 2011 5:04 PM
To: Committees
Subject: Submission for Inquiry with regard to the Fitter's Hall, Kingston

To Whom it May Concern,

Attached is my submission for the inquiry with regard to the Fitter's Hall in Kingston.

Kind regards,
Natasha.

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Dr Natasha Fijn
College of Arts and Social Sciences Postdoctoral Research Fellow
School of Archaeology and Anthropology
Australian National University

As a member of the public who enjoys attending exhibitions hosted by Megalo Print Studio I am writing to submit my support for Megalo Access Arts to permanently remain at the allocated venue of the Fitters Hall in Kingston.

a) The best use of the Fitters workshop, taking into account the acoustic qualities, heritage value, its location, cost and community demand of the building

The best use of the Fitters workshop is for it to be used as it was used historically in the past, as a place for making and using machinery, such as Megalo's printing presses are used today. The location in Kingston is ideal for Megalo Print Studio, as this would mean that anyone wanting to view Canberra's (and the Nation's) prominent artists could walk between the main gallery venues. A tourist walk could be established (and is already basically there) between the gallery spaces at 1) The National Library; 2) The National Portrait Gallery; 3) The National Gallery of Australia; 4) The Canberra Glassworks and 5) the Megalo Print Studio in the Fitter's Hall. This would establish Canberra as a central hub for exhibiting and viewing artwork of national and international standing. The location at the Fitter's Hall would be used daily by the arts community and would no doubt draw large crowds to any exhibitions, as was evident from the large numbers in attendance at the initial *Print Big* show in the Fitter's Hall space.

b) Options for alternative venues for use by a range of community music groups.

It is my understanding that there has been funding allocated for a new concert hall to be built at the National Arboretum. The musicians could quite readily be accommodated there, or in any of the other locations that are already in existence in Canberra. The Fitter's Hall should be the permanent residence of Megalo Print Studio, as members of the Canberra community would have constant access to facilities and be able to make use of it as a workspace throughout the year (as it was historically used on a daily basis). Choral musicians would only use the space a few times of year and for a very specific purpose within a small sector of the community, which would mean that for much of the year the space would remain empty (which is not in keeping with its historic use).

c) Options for alternative purpose built accommodation for Megalo Print Studio.

The Fitter's Hall is a light and beautiful space for the exhibition of art works. I attended the *Print Big* exhibition within the Fitter's Hall and it was a wonderful experience to view the work in a spacious setting, rather than the cramped exhibition space where Megalo Print Studio is currently located in Watson. Previously Megalo Print Studio has had to move to different locations, in suboptimal locations in the Canberra suburbs. In my view, no other location or purpose-built building would have the same atmosphere as the historic Fitter's Hall. If Megalo Print Studio were able to retain permanent residence within the Fitter's Hall, the venue would become recognised on a national and international scale, as it would be ideally located alongside the other national institutions, such as the National Portrait Gallery, the National Gallery of Australia and the Canberra Glassworks (see comment in a) above).

d) any other relevant matter.

As an academic, visual anthropologist and general member of the public, I enjoy viewing exhibitions in Canberra. I would be very disappointed if Megalo Print Studio were not granted permanent residence in the Fitter's Hall, as I view it as an ideal location, central to other prominent art institutions in Canberra. The building is already a beautiful space for viewing artwork, comparable to famous international gallery spaces. Print makers from around the world could exhibit there, as it is grand in scale and scope.