

Submission to ACT Assembly Inquiry into the future use of the
Fitters' Workshop in the Kingston Arts Precinct

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I am writing to support the case of Megalo Access Arts to secure tenancy at the Fitters Workshop in Kingston. I have been a resident of the ACT, and an active member of the Canberra arts community for twenty-eight years. I am fully aware of the role that Megalo has performed in providing community access to printmaking equipment and expertise.

For over thirty years Megalo has made a significant contribution to the development of the local and national visual arts industry through its access, education and residency programs. It has also provided unique opportunities for a wide range of isolated groups and organisations to participate in projects that provide skills development for participants, and outcomes that increase awareness of marginalised sections within the community.

Megalo is the only workshop in Australia that provides access to all forms of printmaking equipment in an environment that meets and promotes current occupational health and safety standards. Megalo performs an essential role in providing career opportunities for graduate students from the Canberra School of Art and Canberra Institute of Technology. For over fifteen years Megalo's residency program has also attracted established and mid career artists from interstate and overseas to visit Canberra specifically to access its printmaking equipment.

Through out its long and colourful history Megalo has been forced to operate from under the cloud of temporary accommodation in difficult locations that have limited the opportunity to increase its public profile. Its members have experienced repeated disruptions and the inconvenience of being denied access to its facilities during extended periods of closure caused by having to relocate large and expensive printmaking equipment. Despite these setbacks Megalo, through the commitment of its staff and dedication of its members has continued to provide printmaking access to the wider community and maintain its place as one of the key ACT arts organisations.

Megalo has clearly demonstrated its ability to successfully manage economic viability and artistic innovation. Megalo is ideally suited to contribute to the vision of the Kingston Arts Precinct: *Dynamic, inspirational, energetic: where artists, cultural organisations and creative businesses make, teach, exhibit, perform and sell their work.* Megalo's programme will significantly complement the activities of the Glassworks and the public profile established by the Old Bus Depot Markets. By occupying the Fitters Workshop, Megalo will maximise the community's use and appreciation of a landmark building by providing a permanent home to vibrant arts facility that is in keeping with the buildings industrial heritage.