

**Submission
No 352**

**INQUIRY INTO THE MUSIC AND ARTS ECONOMY IN
NEW SOUTH WALES**

Name: Mr Gilbert Grace

Date received: 28 February 2018

to

The Chairperson,

The Music and Arts Economy Inquiry,

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 6 – PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

Dear, the Hon Paul Green,

I have worked and continue to work in the arts in NSW, as an artist, an art installer and tour guide. My thirty plus years of experience is mainly as a visual artist working in a studio with six years of tertiary training. I am mindful of the research done by Professor Throsby into the art industry and the fact that a small percentage of artists gain full time employment in the arts. Many like myself work a number of jobs to maintain our personal and professional status as professional artists. The demands are great and the financial rewards negligible compared to other professions that require similar commitments in time, education and sacrifice.

I have participated in the establishment and running of a small number of galleries and artists studios. These are the places that artists require to create and show work in the attempt to gain an audience and following on the way to professional recognition. This is a precarious position with few economic safeguards and a still ill-defined career path, despite the efforts of the Australia Council, established under a Liberal government.

One of the jobs I have created for myself is to lead guided tours to artists studios and artist run initiatives. Many of the artists who have worked in large studio complexes are now facing eviction or the loss of gallery space as redevelopment targets large industrial warehouses in zones close to transport and inner city hubs. Effort to keep artists within inner city areas to add vibrancy and life are restricted to some short term programs of live work or work accommodation that is neither

practical nor productive for artists who require security and long term access to workspace. The locations targetted at present include Carrington Rd, Marrickville, areas around Green Square and Beaconsfield, Waterloo, Erskineville, Newtown, St Peters, Sydenham, Marrickville, Tempe, etc.

There needs to be a greater commitment to retaining artists within these locations lest they become desicated dormitory suburbs, filled with medium density apartment blocks filled with office and retail, service workers. If the government hopes to retain a vibrant art community in Sydney there must be cheap, affordable, secure, long term, residential and residential/working space available to artists. The alternative is that artists will be pushed further out of Sydney, into the Blue Mountains and beyond denuding the cultural life of Sydney.

The Art sector has a proven economic benefit being in the top five for generating economic activity. The arts benefit academic and social life. Australia should and could be doing more to accept and promote its grassroots artistic culture(s), adding to the prosperity of the nation.

Yours sincerely,

Gilbert Grace

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