



Richard Poulton, 2022

JULY 2022

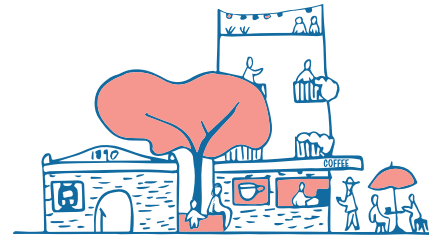
# Kingston Arts Precinct Creative Panel Discussion Summary

Suburban Land Agency



four  
STUDIO fold

place  
design  
group.



# Introduction.

**The Kingston Arts Precinct development is being led by the ACT Government as a partnership between artsACT and the Suburban Land Agency. The precinct will be located adjacent to the Kingston Foreshore and will be a leading destination for contemporary arts and culture for the ACT region. The ACT Government has made a commitment to delivery of a precinct of the highest value and standard that is sensitive to its surroundings, its cultural heritage and future sustainable living.**

In late 2021, Fourfold Studio was engaged as part of a multi-disciplinary consulting team led by Place Design Group who are undertaking a place-based approach to co-create a Place Brief for the Arts Precinct. Fourfold's role was to facilitate targeted engagement to bring the voices of the creative community into the design and planning process. This report summarises the process and insights obtained during the Creative Panel Discussion held Saturday 7 May, 2022.

Community don't always have the same perspectives. This is a good thing; it is what makes us interesting, diverse and unique. The panel discussion provided an opportunity to share diverse perspectives from the Ngunnawal people, the creative and built environment industry, and the ACT Heritage Council. Ideas presented during the discussion were further explored with participants during Co-Creation Workshop Two which occurred immediately after the panel.

The collaborative process of developing the Place Brief will ensure a shared vision that represent diverse perspectives and a precinct that is welcoming and loved by all.

## **This is only the beginning!**

Feedback received following the discussion was very positive. Both participants and panelists enjoyed the opportunity to share ideas and expressed desires to continue the conversation.

“The location determines interaction with people and the environment, links are vital to the natural area, to Telopea Park, to the internal cohesion of the precinct.”

~ Participant feedback

# Panel Overview.

**Event Name:** Kingston Arts Precinct Creative Panel Discussion

**Event Location:** Rydges Hotel, 17 Canberra Avenue

**Event Date/Time:** Saturday 7th May, 10.00am–11.30am

The key objectives of the panel discussion were to:

- Give a voice to all stakeholder perspectives including artists - with a focus on discussing 'what is an arts-led precinct?'
- Create an understanding that we need to reach a balance, and all get behind a shared vision.
- Build excitement with the community.
- Prepare participants for the co-create workshop that followed.

The panel discussion was dynamic and engaging, integrating seamlessly the diverse perspectives of the creative community. The session was facilitated by Brooke Williams Director at Fourfold Studio.

Over 60 people attended the event including a mix of community members and project stakeholders, varying in the level of previous exposure they have had to the project.

## Questions

Questions asked were broadly structured around the overarching categorisation of place hardware, software or journey. This allowed the discussion to evolve organically. Some of the questions included:

- What does an arts-led precinct mean to you?
- What is the opportunity for the Arts Precinct including what aspects of the precinct are really special?
- What inspires and drives you in your creative profession?
- What are the opportunities for the precinct to provide support for different creatives?
- What has been missing in Canberra you'd like to see here?
- How do we bring together and foster stories and bring them to life within the precinct?
- This will be a place for Canberra, not just artists. Hearing the place needs to be welcoming for all, is there an essence of place or core experience that needs to be there to create the social life we have in mind?



## Panelists

The six panelist included:



### **Catherine Townsend**

#### **ACT Government Architect**

Catherine is the ACT Government Architect. A long-time resident of Canberra, she provides strategic and independent advice to Government on the built environment and design quality through the National Capital Design Review Panel. Catherine retains her involvement in private practice and connections to the immediate issues of consumers.



### **Judith Nangala Crispin**

#### **Artist**

Judith is a Canberra-based poet and visual artist with a background in music. She is a proud descendant of Bpangerang people from the Murray River. Her visual arts practice is centred around Lumachrome glass printing, a combination of lumen printing, chemigram and cliché verre techniques. Judith has published two collections of poetry and has exhibited all over the place, most recently at Grainger Gallery in Fyshwick. Currently she's working on an extended illustrated verse novel.



### **Richie Allan**

#### **Ngunnawal Knowledge Holder**

Richie is a Ngunnawal knowledge holder artist and educator. He is a Director with Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation TOAC - a group of local Indigenous Elders and leaders who work to add value in the community. Richie is dedicated to protecting and preserving the interests and furthering the aspirations of the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

“It should be more about people who love the arts rather than the artists themselves.  
~ Judith



## **Ketura Budd**

### **Managing Producer of 'You are Here'**

Ketura is a Canberra based, non-binary creative producer and performance artist with over ten years' experience in creative, facilitation and management roles in the arts industry. Ketura is currently the managing producer for You Are Here Canberra, a small organisation focussed on developing the practice of local artist and producers and fostering a critical creative community. They are the Creative Producer and an artist with CLUBSCORE, Canberra's queer art and sport collective dedicated to centering the experience of trans and gender diverse people in sport. They hold a Diploma in Live Production from Melbourne Polytechnic, and Ketura has worked as a stage and production manager for independent theatre companies around Australia. They are highly experienced in event management and have worked for several Canberra based arts organisations as a pricer or event manager including Ainslie Gorman Arts Centre, Dionysus and Little Dove.



## **Dr Hanna Hoyne**

### **Artist | Current artsACT Artist in Residence**

Hanna is a visual artist and researcher working in public space design as a sculptor, muralist and mentor. Her work explores how we position ourselves in our contested cosmos; how we negotiate our aspirations and limitations; and our relationship to knowledge-systems in a time when human survival on our planet is uncertain. Hanna is well travelled, having exhibited in Australia, Germany and Hong Kong; conducted fieldwork in India, Malaysia and Singapore; and studied in Korea, Japan and France. Interestingly, she has an interest in collaboration with landscape architects, cultural agencies and developers, aiming to inject beauty and whimsy into their work, which has such an influence on how our city spaces are shaped.



## **Dr Kenneth Heffernan**

### **Chairperson, ACT Heritage Council, Expert in archaeology**

Dr Ken Heffernan is a current member of the ACT Heritage Council and appointed Chairperson in March 2021.

Dr Heffernan holds a Bachelor of Arts in Pre-History, Bachelor of Laws and a PhD in Archaeology. Dr Heffernan served as the ACT Heritage Council Deputy Chair from 1995-97 and as a member from 1992-95. Dr Heffernan has worked as a consultant in Aboriginal and historical archaeology as well as a lecturer in archaeology at ANU. He is currently semi-retired, volunteering at the Hall School Museum.



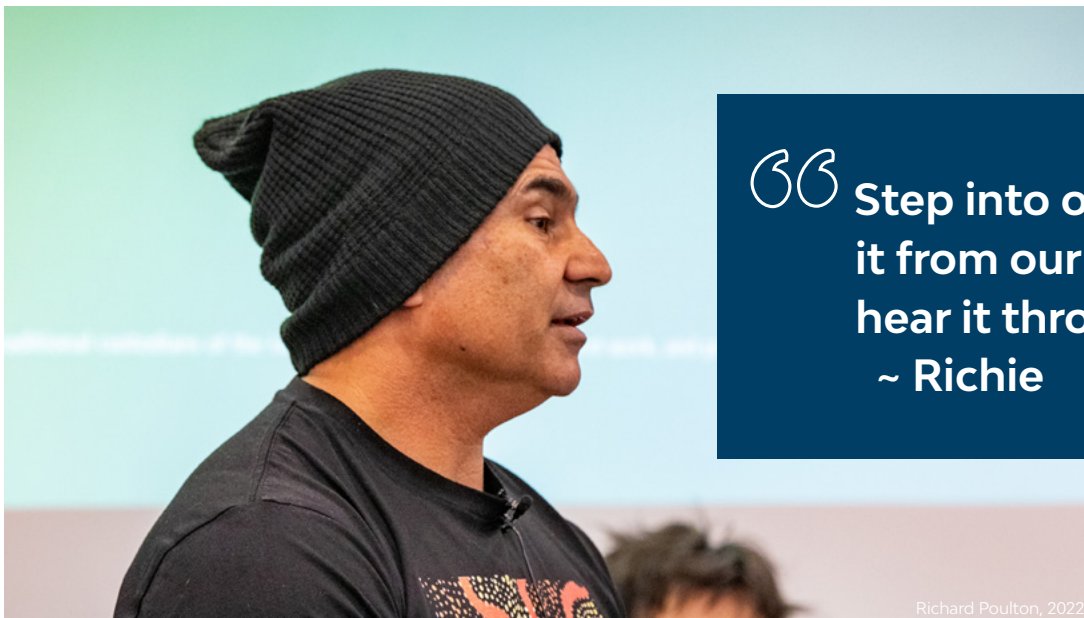
# What we heard.

The following section provides a summary of some of the key takeaways from the panel discussion categorised into reoccurring themes and points of discussion:

“ I wish for my children to be teaching me about the Ngunnawal culture & language that they know about from hanging out [at the Indigenous cultural heart] and doing workshops and classes there with local Indigenous artists and teachers.  
~ Hanna

## First Nations Voices, Perspectives and Practices

A lot of the discussion undertaken focused on the importance of putting the voices, perspectives and practices of Ngunnawal and other First Nations people at the forefront of the decision making process. It is about recognising that the oldest living culture in the world had a master plan for Canberra prior to Walter Burley Griffin. This is captured in the plants, wetland, river that flowed through the landscape and natural life. All conversation must start here and let the evolution of this place be guided by the Knowledge Holders of this land the Ngunnawal people. This includes sharing stories, listening, learning about story, art, First Nations culture and being open to new processes. In doing this, it is important to acknowledge and respect the time it takes to build relationships and follow the process.



“ Step into our world, see it from our eyes and hear it through our ears.  
~ Richie

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“Canberra is a bit like the good front room, waiting for the Queen to drop in. The Arts Precinct is an opportunity to put a hole in that veneer.”  
~ Catherine

NOOKS NIGHT  
DAY EXPLORATION  
DARK EXPERIENCE  
BUILT NATURAL  
LIGHT

### Diversity + Access

The Arts Precinct has an opportunity to create a space that is accessible and welcoming for all artists and creatives. This ties into cultural, economic and physical accessibility while creating opportunities for intergenerational connection and access to the site. This includes catering to the eldest and youngest members of our community. The ACT Government is achieving this by co-designing the precinct with the people who will be the end users of the site. It is not just a place for artists alone, but for those who have a love for art and creativity. Canberra has the opportunity to reflect and showcase the voices of its diverse community, creating a ‘choir of voices’ engaged in how the city is used and activated.

The term arts precinct is interesting as what art is, is challenging to define. To ensure access and inclusion of all, a variety of spaces need to be provided that meet the needs of diverse skills, art forms and crafts across differing levels of skills and experiences. Like all art there needs to be an opportunity for people to express themselves openly including around ideas that may be political in nature.

Getting to and from the site and ensuring the community is comfortable while there is a core component to it’s level of accessibility. It will be important to identify and remove barriers for marginalised people and communities.

### Co-existence

The Arts Precinct will be many things to many people. By nature, Canberra is highly planned and refined both in its design and its use. This has resulted in minimal organic growth or development taking place, both in how places are designed and how they are activated and used. The Precinct has an opportunity to provide a structure for which a diverse range of practices and activities can take place within. It needs to be accommodating and have the opportunity to support a variety of uses, by a diverse range of people, over a range of times. The new Precinct cannot be intimidating and instead needs to be a place people feel they can come together to explore their own creativity and contribute to the character of this place. It is a ‘robust and relaxed’ place that welcomes you to have a go, regardless of the mess or mistakes. We need to ‘rebalance’ a City that has been led by design, and that followed a plan.



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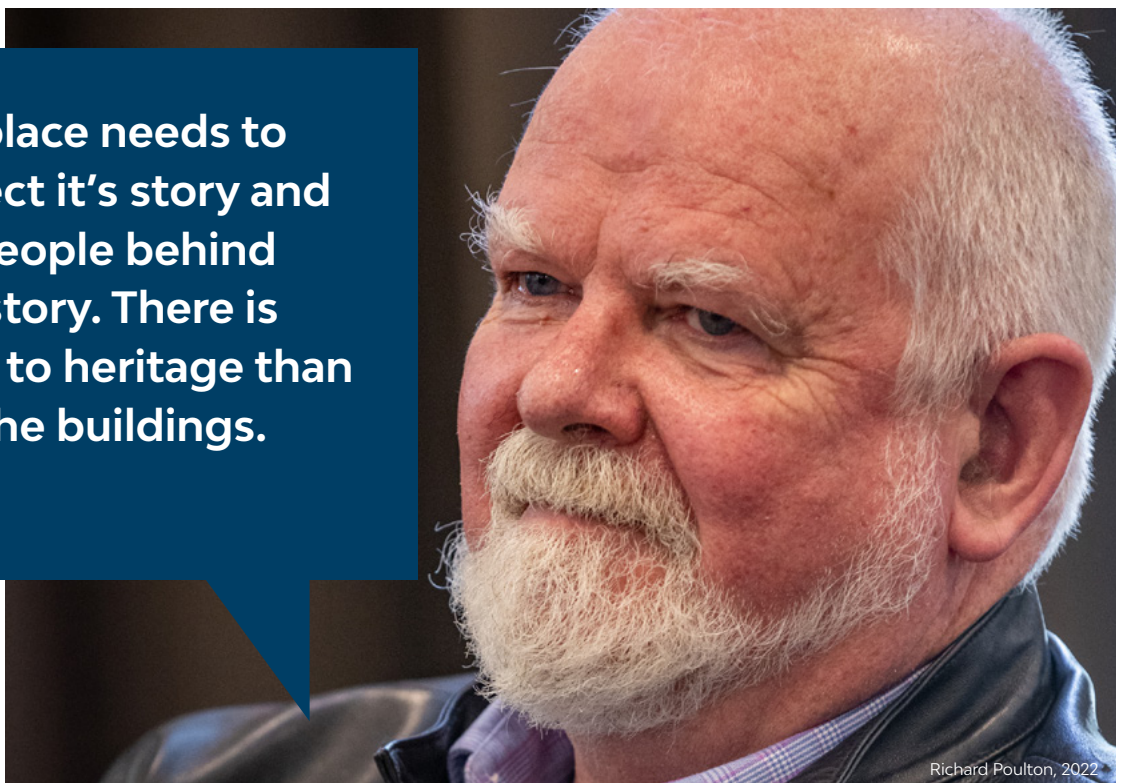
You are welcome here,  
please come in.

### Place

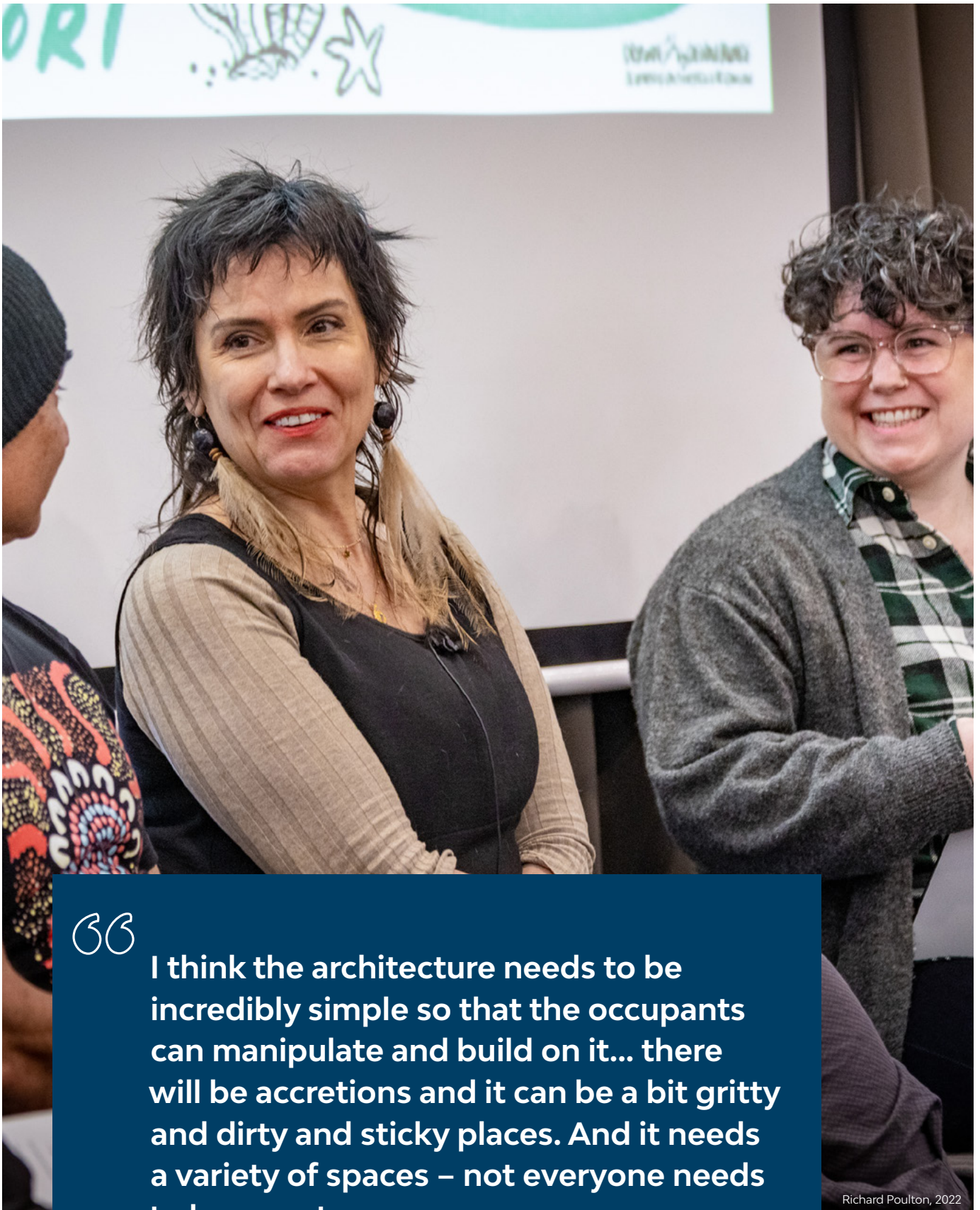
In undertaking this process it is important to start with place. This includes creating a sense you are welcome here, please come in. The Arts Precinct could have a different language – dynamic, warm, witty, sticky places (a term used to describe a place you feel you can hang out in). This is in contrast to the monumental scale of Canberra with dividing edges such as Northbourne Avenue – crossing roads with a degree of peril because it takes so long. Typically the city is a little dismissive of difference. The Precinct is the layering where we can open the door, pull back the layers of discovery and hidden delight. It is about recognising the rich histories and stories that have shaped this place. Equally it is an evolving place for people to make memories. Places need to have a human presence to feel welcoming. A place dense with people is how you create a buzzing heart for the city. The space needs to be comfortable with itself, respect it's story and the people behind that story. Additionally there is more to heritage than just the buildings. In 1915 the Powerstation was about bringing light, a place that energised Canberra. It's important to keep those phenomena in mind as inspiration to the creative process.

“ Places need to have  
a human presence  
to feel welcoming.  
~ Ketura

“ This place needs to  
respect it's story and  
the people behind  
that story. There is  
more to heritage than  
just the buildings.  
~Ken



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“

I think the architecture needs to be incredibly simple so that the occupants can manipulate and build on it... there will be accretions and it can be a bit gritty and dirty and sticky places. And it needs a variety of spaces – not everyone needs to be an extreme.

~Catherine

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### Nurture

There is an ecology of arts and affiliated arts services (marketing, finance, bookkeepers, people who help market the art industry) needed to support growth and sustainable exploration of creative potential. Consider mentoring opportunities, co-ops and 5-6 year memberships to step through the cycle of creative growth. The journey to get us there as well as the journey beyond must remain collaborative. A true co-design approach. Arts partnership with built environment professionals and collaborating with community that is led by arts.

The future place custodians of the precinct will continue to shape, activate and manage the precinct. Their support, as well as support by others, is needed to help artists value themselves and be valued by society. The key to making this happen is to put in place policies and procedures the place we want this to be. Overarching guidance in writing will ensure we all have somebody to answer to.



**It needs to be a  
space where people  
can be vulnerable.**  
~Judith

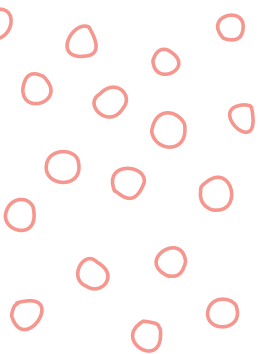


**These places should  
open to everybody,  
be inclusive.**  
~ Richie



The panel discussion was recorded by **Devon Bunce**, graphic facilitator and digital storyteller. She listened in to the session and provided 'live scribe' onscreen responding to the creative panel's conversation. More information is available here: [www.digitalstorytellers.com.au](http://www.digitalstorytellers.com.au) and on social media @101storytellers.





This is an **ACT Government** placemaking project delivered in partnership between **Suburban Land Agency** and **artsACT**. For further information visit:  
[www.yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/kingston-arts-precinct](http://www.yoursayconversations.act.gov.au/kingston-arts-precinct)

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