

## National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

Geoff Farquhar-Still

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

My name is Geoff Farquhar-Still. I am based in Launceston Tasmania, and I work as a designer/ sculptor/ public artist.

I studied at the Canberra school of Art at a time when there were still a full compliment of workshop facilities, most of which are now closed and the courses are no longer available. I have had amazing support in my career from Design Canberra, Megalo Print studio, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, the Canberra Glassworks, Design Tasmania and Tasmania Museum and Gallery. This support has enabled me to develop a host of skills and projects which I have been able to share with other makers through my workshops over the last 20 years. In that time many of the artisans I have trained have gone on to have their own practices and set up workshops across the country. The skills I learned enabled me to complete major public commissions across Australia and has seen my work collected by private and public collections.

All of this opportunity grew from my foundational hands on, studio based training.

Design, Craft and Art are my life my creative passion and my livelihood.

Over the past 15 years, I have have watched as art schools cancel courses and close workshops, TAFE courses are cut back and opportunities to develop handskills become harder and harder to find. This is particularly true of Craft's like furniture design jewellery making glass blowing and ceramics.

Over time this will lead to the gradual disappearance of these Craft practices as existing practitioners grow old and retire. Once the Workshop's have closed and the equipment has been dispersed and older practitioners retire, there will be nowhere to learn and no one to teach new up-and-coming artists. These crafts will then pass out of existence which will be a tragic loss for culture and society.

The effect of this will not be recognised until it is far too late.

If you imagine for a moment, that everything in our world that relies on Craftsmanship and Design suddenly disappears it would be a very boring world indeed. The flow on effects from creative practice influence every aspect of our lives from the clothes we wear to the films we watch on TV to the furniture we have in our houses.

To rely on creative practice overseas to supply all of our needs is to handover our culture in its entirety, in the process losing our identity and the unique character that defines Australian Design.

I support the three asks made by the Australian Craft and Design Centres (ACDC) network in their submission to this consultation: a 10-year workforce development plan that addresses skills and training shortages for craftspeople and designers; the establishment of a dedicated craft and design structure within Creative Australia, with its own mandate to advocate for the sector, develop funding pathways, and coordinate across government; and an export and tourism development strategy that positions Australian makers in international markets, including at showcase events like Milan Design Week.