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Submission to the National Cultural Policy Consultation
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I write in strong support of the joint submission made by the Australian Craft and Design Centres (ACDC) network and the call for greater recognition and investment in Australia's craft and design sector.

For more than 25 years I have worked as a furniture designer and maker in Tasmania, operating across design, manufacturing, education, exhibitions and cultural advocacy. My career has given me firsthand insight into the economic, cultural and social value generated by craft and design practice in Australia.

Despite the significant contribution designers and makers make to Australia's cultural identity, tourism economy and manufacturing innovation, the sector remains chronically under-recognised and under-supported at a national level. Many practitioners operate small businesses or sole practices with limited pathways for training, export development, mentorship or long-term sustainability. This is particularly true in regional states such as Tasmania, where craft and design are deeply tied to place, material knowledge and cultural tourism.

I strongly support the ACDC network's three key recommendations.

Firstly, Australia urgently needs a long-term workforce plan for craft and design. Skills-based creative practices require years of training, mentorship and technical development. Without meaningful investment in education, apprenticeships, tertiary pathways and professional development, we risk losing irreplaceable material knowledge and manufacturing capability. Craft and design should not be viewed as peripheral cultural activity; they are highly skilled professions that contribute to innovation, sustainability and local economies.

Secondly, dedicated craft and design capacity within Creative Australia is essential. The sector requires specialist advocacy and leadership from people who understand the unique nature of material-based practice, small-scale production and design-led enterprise. Craft and design are often overshadowed by larger artforms despite their broad public engagement and economic impact. A dedicated mandate would help ensure the sector receives appropriate strategic attention and policy development.

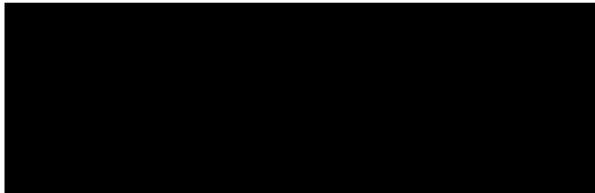
Finally, I strongly support the development of an export and tourism strategy for Australian craft and design. Australian makers produce work of exceptional quality with strong international appeal, yet many lack the infrastructure and support needed to access global markets. Investment in export initiatives, touring exhibitions, design promotion and cultural tourism would create significant economic opportunities while strengthening Australia's international cultural identity.

In Tasmania, I have seen how design and making can transform communities, support local industry and foster meaningful cultural connection. Visitors increasingly seek

authentic experiences, locally made products and stories grounded in place. Craft and design are uniquely positioned to deliver this.

A strong national cultural policy must recognise craft and design not as niche activities, but as vital contributors to Australia's cultural, economic and social future.

Sincerely,



Laura McCusker

