

National Cultural Policy Submission

1471507

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Individual

Angelina Russo



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

My name is Dr Angelina Russo. I am a designer and researcher based in Normanville on the Fleurieu Peninsula, South Australia, and the founder of Fleurieu Made Pty Ltd, a circular knitwear and circular measurement business. I work at the intersection of craft practice, sovereign manufacturing capability, and circular economy infrastructure, and I support the three asks made by the Australian Craft and Design Centres network.

The case for a 10-year workforce plan for craft and design is, in my experience, the most urgent. The knitting machinery I use in my own practice exists in fewer than a handful of working studios in Australia. The people who know how to set up, maintain, and program these machines are mostly past retirement age, and when that knowledge goes, it does not come back. The Australian Fashion Council's National Manufacturing Strategy for Australian Fashion and Textiles 2026 to 2036, released this March, documents this pattern across the broader textile, clothing, and footwear sector, and calls for dedicated apprenticeship pathways and recognition of prior learning frameworks. A National Cultural Policy that does not include craft and design workforce infrastructure leaves that strategy without its cultural counterpart, and leaves the most distinctive part of Australia's design economy without the skilled people it depends on.

A 10-year horizon matters because the skills involved cannot be taught in a six-month module. Hand skills, machine literacy, materials knowledge, and the judgment that comes from years of work all compound over time, and the training infrastructure has to compound with them.

The export and tourism strategy ask is structurally connected to the workforce question. Australian craft and design has international recognition, and the European regulatory environment is shifting in ways that favour producers who can evidence provenance, materials, and end-of-life pathways. The Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation begins enforcement in March 2027, and the EU-Australia Free Trade Agreement concluded in March 2026 opens market access at exactly the moment Australian makers should be visible in it. My own work on circular capability measurement, supported by Green Industries SA, contributes to the verification infrastructure Australian designers and makers will need in those markets. A coordinated export strategy that takes Australian designers to Milan Design Week and equivalent venues, supported by trade promotion infrastructure, would convert this readiness into actual market presence.

On dedicated craft and design representation within Creative Australia, I would note that craft and design currently sit between the cultural and industrial portfolios in ways that fall through the gaps of both. A dedicated internal structure with the mandate to coordinate across portfolios is the practical mechanism for closing that gap.

I support the submission of the Australian Craft and Design Centres network, and I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the workforce and export strategy work that follows.