

National Cultural Policy Submission

1471668

Public and anonymous



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

My name is [REDACTED] I am based in Canberra, and I work as a Sewing machine technician.

I have made things with my hands all my life. Sewing my own garments is my main focus. I have a degree in Conservation of Cultural Materials, and then later did a Certificate 4 in Clothing Production at [REDACTED] TAFE. This background brought me to a local sewing repair shop 12 years ago where I did on the job training to be a technician. It helps me be a better maker, and I support my creative community.

Unfortunately, sewing machine technician is now a rare trade. Most technicians are well beyond retirement age. At 51, I'm the youngest in my region. I'm training a few junior technicians, but it can take 18 months before they are confident working independently on a machine. I also cannot get financial support to train them as there is no longer a qualification in Australia. We have been busier since COVID as the community returns to mending and making their own clothing and accessories. The younger generation is also using these skills to find their authentic style and recycle textiles. Any fashion related industry in Australia will be compromised by the lack of suitable training for technicians to repair and maintain domestic and industrial sewing machines and overlockers. I already have customers travel many hours to bring their machines to be serviced. If we lose our technicians in Canberra, people will need to travel or courier to Sydney to have their machines serviced. This would lead many to not bother, drop their creative pursuit, dump a repairable machine in landfill, and purchase a cheaper flimsy alternative. A cycle we're already seeing with other appliances. Making with your own hands is beneficial to the individual and the community in so many ways, it would be a tragedy to let it wither due to a lack of boldness.