

Canberra Glassworks

Submission - National Cultural Policy

We are a nation of makers.

As Australia's leading centre dedicated to contemporary glass practice and one of the best-equipped glass facilities in the world, Canberra Glassworks demonstrates the important role small-to-medium arts organisations play within Australia's cultural, economic and creative infrastructure.

Canberra Glassworks program and structure represent a significant opportunity for growth across cultural tourism, creative industries, advanced manufacturing and international cultural engagement. Operating as both cultural institutions and specialist production facilities, combining artistic excellence, workforce development, tourism, education and manufacturing capability within a single organisation.

As recognised in *Revive*, strong cultural infrastructures are essential. However, the long-term sustainability of Australia's creative ecology depends not only on major institutions, but on the network of small-to-medium organisations that develop artists, maintain specialist skills, support experimentation and provide access to creative participation.

These organisations are the research and development infrastructure of Australia's cultural sector. They provide the environments where artists and craftspeople develop skills, undertake professional practice and build careers over time. This talent pipeline is critical to the success of Australia's major cultural institutions, festivals and international cultural profile.

Importantly, organisations such as Canberra Glassworks contribute directly to broader national policy priorities. Through cultural tourism experiences, public programs and major exhibitions, the organisation aligns strongly with *THRIVE 2030 – Australia's Visitor Economy Strategy*, demonstrating how arts infrastructure supports destination development, visitation and economic activity.

The organisation also aligns with the objectives of *A Future Made in Australia* by supporting creative manufacturing capability, material innovation, workshop-based production and specialised fabrication skills. Canberra Glassworks operates at the intersection of arts practice and manufacturing, supporting collaborations with architects, designers, industry and public institutions while sustaining highly specialised technical capability.

Equally, the objectives of the *National Skills Agreement* are aligned with work through vocational and workforce development pathways that prioritise hands-on specialist training, workshop-based learning and industry-led technical skills development. However, the craft and design sector has historically lacked strong integration within national skills and training frameworks despite its significant contribution to creative industries, manufacturing and

cultural production. This challenge has been compounded by the decline of workshop-based craft and design training within Australia's university sector, where the closure of specialist courses has weakened the national skills pipeline and reduced opportunities for students to develop practical material knowledge and production capability.

The more investment made in the SME sector, the more Australian artists and culture will thrive.

Recommendations

- **Pillar 4 – Strong Cultural Infrastructure:** Recognise specialist craft and design organisations, production facilities and arts centres as essential cultural infrastructure through increased investment in operational sustainability, specialist facilities and creative production capability.
- **Pillar 3 – The Centrality of the Artist:** Build vocational and workforce development pathways across craft and design. As recommended by the ACDC submission.
- **Pillar 5 – Reaching the Audience:** Support international exchange, export development, cultural tourism and market development initiatives. As recommended by the ACDC submission.
- **Implementation and Evaluation:** Include measurable KPIs in the National Cultural Policy to track workforce outcomes, export growth, visitor-economy impact, and the craft and design sector's return on investment.