

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

Annette Blair



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

My name is Annette Blair. I am based in the [REDACTED] region and work as a glass artist, designer, teacher and skilled fabricator.

Craft and design have driven my entire adult life. Throughout childhood and school I was constantly immersed in creative projects, taking as many art and craft subjects as possible. My high school art teacher encouraged me to undertake work experience at The Australian National University glass workshop, and the first time I saw glassblowing I knew I had found myself.

I went on to study for four years in the ANU glass program, followed by further training at JamFactory in Adelaide. In 2008 I returned to Canberra to work from Canberra Glassworks, where I have continued to develop a diverse practice. Today my work spans exhibition pieces, product design, and the fabrication of blown glass works for leading Australian and international artists and designers, including Patricia Piccinini, Nell, Maree Clarke and Janet Laurence. I also teach regularly in Australia, including at ANU, as well as internationally.

The craft and material knowledge I have built over more than 25 years is my greatest professional asset and has enabled me to make a living doing what I love. It means everything to continue this work while also helping ensure future pathways exist for emerging craft and design practitioners.

I recently completed my largest public artwork commission to date after the Australian War Memorial recognised the value of locally designed and crafted work. I was commissioned to create two large-scale artworks for the Memorial's new entrance, consisting of almost 2,000 handcrafted glass eucalyptus leaves. Projects like this are important on many levels: for me as the artist, for Canberra Glassworks as the fabrication facility, for the local glass community through employment and training opportunities, and for the wider public who experience a moment of quiet reflection through the work.

I feel fortunate to live within an hour of a world-class facility like Canberra Glassworks. Without it, I would not be able to sustain my practice in its current form. Through my work with students and emerging artists, I am already seeing the impact of reduced practice-based training at university level, and I am doing what I can to help bridge this skills gap for the next generation. Glassmaking is collaborative and team-based, so training is an investment in both individual practices and the future of Australia's internationally respected glass community.

Without proper investment in the craft and design sector, facilities such as Canberra Glassworks and JamFactory, and accessible funding pathways for practitioners at all levels, these highly specialised skills risk being lost.

I support the Australian Craft and Design Centres (ACDC) network in its submission to this consultation, including calls for a 10-year workforce development plan addressing skills and training shortages, the establishment of a dedicated craft and design structure within Creative Australia, and an export and tourism strategy that positions Australian makers in international markets.