

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I am an independent frameworkeing artist and sculptor, working in the realm of contemporary glass art. I also serve as an arts worker and employee at Canberra Glassworks, where I support and develop artistic programming within Australia's foremost glass art centre.

Within a year of graduating from the ANU School of Art and Design with a major in sculpture, I held my first solo exhibition at the Contemporary Art Space in Manuka, ACT. In the years since, craft has become the connective thread of my life — through international travel, I have built relationships with craftspeople across cultures, learning traditional techniques and finding in them a profound means of communication that transcends language and geography.

Both incidentally as an artist, and within my role that helps foster the development of new talent for recent art graduates, it's impossible not to notice the degrading of the skills current graduates are walking away with at the end of their degrees. Their time 'on the tools' due to funding cuts, and the risks, real and imagined, that lead to less investment in health and safety, prevents students from having the access to machinery and skills development within their creative courses that I was able to enjoy, almost thirty years ago, as a student.

Craft builds bridges. Working alongside makers from different nations and traditions fosters mutual respect, shared curiosity, and genuine human connection. It is a tool of wonder — one that counters loneliness and animosity, and instead cultivates delight in colour, form and function. These are not incidental benefits; they are among craft's most enduring contributions to civil society.

Yet when craft traditions survive only through internet documentation, we lose far more than technique. We lose living, intergenerational knowledge — ways of understanding our histories, forming our identities, and strengthening our communities through shared making. Intergenerational craft practice is a social bond and an economic pathway, offering meaningful livelihoods for individuals and families who fall outside conventional employment structures.

I therefore strongly endorse the three asks put forward by the Australian Craft and Design Centres (ACDC) network in their submission to this consultation:

A 10-year workforce development plan to address critical skills and training shortages across the craft and design sector;

The establishment of a dedicated craft and design structure within Creative Australia, with its own mandate to advocate for the sector, develop funding pathways, and coordinate across government; and

An export and tourism development strategy that positions Australian makers in international markets, including through representation at flagship events such as Milan Design Week.

A national strategic policy for craft and design is not merely a cultural investment, it is an investment in community cohesion, economic inclusion, and Australia's creative identity on the world stage. I urge the Government to act with ambition and urgency.