

I urge the federal government to build on the *Revive* Policy by taking bolder steps to include craft and makers in the next policy.

Australia falls behind other western jurisdictions (even on a per capita basis) in relation to:

- quality of training,
- recognition of expertise and mastery,
- philanthropy supporting arts, culture and craft,
- recognition of the value inherent in making and craft, and
- legal protections for intellectual property in object design and manufacture.

I am a furniture maker, working in wood. I studied a Certificate of Furniture Design & Manufacture at the Sturt School for Wood in 2020. I do not currently derive an income from furniture making, though I have relied on it as my sole source of income in the past.

Opportunities for establishing a full time practice, or working as an employee maker and aspiring to a sustainable income over time and experience are extremely limited. I know many successful makers, with write ups in the best and most widely read publications and exhibitions in the best spaces. Almost all of them, even those ostensibly at the top of their game or with the highest level of repute either struggle to make a reasonable living or their practice is subsidised significantly by a partner or other part-time work.

Training and Education

Many professional fine woodworking programs have closed, reduced hours, or are at risk of shutting down. The *Sturt School for Wood* stands as Australia's only remaining full-time fine furniture training program, where many of our Artists in Residence trained before joining our studios. This decline is mirrored in the closure of independent galleries, including the *Bungendore Woodwork Gallery*, once the premier fine woodworking gallery in Australia. A 2023 market analysis commissioned by the VWA and completed by the Melbourne Business School found that while interest in woodworking is growing, few practitioners can thrive financially, making the craft unsustainable for most.

Without intervention, Australia risks losing embedded craft knowledge if the next generation cannot enter the field due to lack of support and the current cost-of-living crisis.

My Recommendations

1. Actions set out in *Revive* (p. 63) should be expanded to apply to craft training organisations, including wood, ceramics, metal, and textiles. While “craft” is mentioned throughout *Revive*, it is often included as an element of First Nations' Arts and Crafts. Craft must be recognised and supported just as the performing and visual arts are.

2. The actions set out in *Revive*, in relation to pillar 3, should be expanded to meet the clearly documented challenges of artists and craftspeople. Achievable Government levers to encourage downstream demand include:
 - extending and expanding low/no interest loans for the purchase of art and objects of craft;
 - re-introducing tax-deductibility for the purchase of art and objects of craft;
 - supporting the recommendations of the Australian Design Alliance, implementing legal protections for designers of furniture and objects (as exists in most other western jurisdictions), encouraging home-grown practitioners to invest in product development and local manufacture.
3. I endorse the three asks made by the Australian Craft and Design Centres (ACDC) network in their submission to this consultation:
 - a 10-year workforce development plan that addresses skills and training shortages for craftspeople and designers
 - 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
 - an export and tourism development strategy that positions Australian makers in international markets, including at showcase events like Milan Design Week