

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

Matthew Prince



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

My name is Matthew Prince. I am based in Launceston, Tasmania, and I work as a Furniture designer/maker.

I have practiced as a designer/maker for the past 16 years. As a business, my practice supports my family and enriches our lives on a daily basis. As a career, my practice provides me with an enormous sense of passion, fulfilment, happiness and connection. I couldn't imagine doing anything else and I will be forever grateful to have the opportunity to do what I do.

I first studied at the Australian school of fine furniture, a private collage, originally set up to teach designer/makers, primary working with timber. I then went on to complete a bachelor of environmental design, majoring in furniture design at UTAS. Both programs provided me with unique exposure to practicing craftspeople, a very particular set of skills in design development and fabrication, and the time to properly test and develop my skills before launching my practice. It was one of the most enjoyable periods of my life and confirmed my chosen path.

The type of courses that I went through have disappeared around Australia over the past decade or so. If I were stating my journey now, I simply wouldn't have the opportunity to acquire the skillset to get to where I am now.

For this sector to continue, it is vital that suitable education opportunities exist. Design and making courses, whether through private collages or universities, are the starting point for the entire sector, which go on to feed design organisations, material suppliers, local manufacturers, retail outlets, architectural projects, and ultimately, the growing consumer base that recognises and demand quality items.

Education institutions that feed this sector have been without proper investment and vision for a long time now and it has been disastrous. I am only grateful to have had the opportunities when I did.

I support 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; and an export and tourism development strategy that positions Australian makers in international markets, including at showcase events like Milan Design Week.