

My name is Fran Romano. I am based in Canberra, and I work as a ceramicist.

Australia's craft and design organisations have played a meaningful role in developing and sustaining my practice, and the practice of many makers I know. Here in Canberra I have been lucky enough to begin as a hobbyist in clay over 30 years ago at the Canberra Potters. And much later to further engage with my material at ANU School of Art and Design - where I learned from world-renowned ceramicists. This education has led to me now practising as a professional artist and educator in my field.

Ceramics is a technical field and we have amazing expertise here in Australia. Without proper investment in this sector, valuable knowledge and expertise would be lost . Understanding the material is key in ceramics, and around Australia already, the erosion of our teaching institutions is having an impact on student numbers and on the skill level of graduates. Globally, ceramics is valued both in the Arts and Craft sectors, yet the range of opportunities available overseas do not exist in this country. Many artists and makers are drawn to opportunities overseas where our artform is taken seriously and valued. If we want to retain our contemporary artists and makers we need to provide pathways for learning, support and opportunities for career development.

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.