

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Organisation

The Australian Association of Glass Artists (Ausglass)

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

The Australian Association of Glass Artists (Ausglass) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of a National Cultural Policy that supports a sustainable, ambitious, and artist-centred future for contemporary craft and design in Australia.

As the national organisation supporting artists, makers, educators, students, and industry professionals working in glass, Ausglass recognises the importance of long-term policy settings that acknowledge the unique contribution and needs of material-based creative practice. Contemporary glass and craft practice are highly specialised artforms requiring significant technical expertise, long-term training, access to infrastructure, and ongoing experimentation. These practices contribute not only to Australia's cultural identity and artistic excellence, but also to education, regional communities, innovation, tourism, and international cultural exchange.

Ausglass supports calls from the contemporary craft and design sector, including through the ACDC network, for the development of a dedicated 10-year workforce and sector development plan for contemporary craft and design. Such a plan should address skills development, artist career pathways, intergenerational knowledge transfer, technical training, and equitable access to facilities and professional opportunities across metropolitan and regional Australia.

We also strongly support the establishment of a dedicated contemporary craft and design structure within Creative Australia to ensure that the sector receives appropriate strategic representation, policy leadership, and specialist expertise. Contemporary craft practices are materially and operationally distinct from many other artforms, and policy responses must reflect these differences.

Access to infrastructure remains one of the most significant challenges facing glass artists and material-based practitioners. Hot glass studios, kilns, coldworking equipment, fabrication technologies, and specialist tools require substantial investment and ongoing operational support. Rising energy and material costs continue to place pressure on artists, independent studios, and small organisations. A National Cultural Policy should include targeted investment in shared making facilities, studio access programs, technical training, artist residencies, and maintenance of specialist infrastructure to ensure artists can continue to work sustainably with complex materials such as glass.

Ausglass also supports the development of a national export and cultural tourism strategy for contemporary craft and design. Australian craft and object-based practices are internationally respected and uniquely positioned to contribute to cultural diplomacy, creative exports, regional tourism, and public engagement. Strategic support for exhibitions, international partnerships, touring opportunities, and creative tourism initiatives would strengthen the visibility and sustainability of Australian makers locally and globally.

Most importantly, a National Cultural Policy must recognise artistic practice itself as essential cultural work. Contemporary craft and glass practice should not be valued solely through commercial or economic outcomes, but as vital forms of creative research, experimentation, storytelling, and cultural expression that enrich Australia's social and cultural life.