

National Cultural Policy Submission

1472814

Public

Individual

Erin Dickson



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

My name is Erin Dickson. I am based in Bungendore, and I work as a Artist, Fabricator and academic.

I recieved my MA and PhD in Glass from University of Sunderland, UK. My foundation in craft has provided me with a unique perspective in the utilisation of heritage techniques and skills in the making of gallery-based and public sculpture. The potential disappearance of these heritage skills represents huge loss of cultural capital nationally and internationally. Craft institutions such as the Canberra Glassworks continue to preserve these skills through artist support and public workshops, allowing people like myself to continue to develop my practice.

Since moving to Australia in 2022 I have been awarded one of Creative Australia's VACDF Major funding grants for a solo exhibition at the Canberra Glassworks in late 2026. This achievement would not have been possible without the support of the glass community.

The loss of heritage skills would be a permanant loss not only within the crafts, but in the wider arts. Canberra Glassworks allows artists to collaborate with skilled facilitators in order to realise small to major projects. Without proper investment, not only do you remove the opportunity for those artists to experiment in a new medium, you also lose essential funding to create jobs for the people with those in-demand skills. This also leads to a lack of opportunities for glass graduates, which creates a talent vacuum as they leave to seek opportunities elsewhere. Proper investment in the arts is proven to enrich the wider culture, community and economy.

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.