

Dear Mr Burke

I am writing, as a self-employed contemporary jewellery designer and maker, in response to the open call for submissions for the National Cultural Policy.

I am also a member of the NSW branch of the Jewellers And Metalsmiths Group Australia (JMGA-NSW Inc.), a volunteer run, non for profit organisation supporting the contemporary jewellers and metalsmiths community within Australia. With an overall aim to promote and maintain the practice of the art of jewellery and metalsmithing within Australia.

As a self-employed jewellery designer and maker I am a strong advocate for keeping the art of metalsmithing and handmade jewellery, and, indeed, other handmade crafts alive within Australia. If not supported, the smaller businesses, organisations and individuals of the handmade industry will quickly be overrun by the larger companies, along with their mass produced products. The rapid development in technology also increases the ease of mass production, putting traditional metalsmithing and handmade jewellery at risk of becoming a lost art to Australia.

I was very lucky to have studied metal smithing and the art of handmade jewellery at the prestigious Art School at the Australian National University, Canberra. However, sadly this learning facility is now closed, and more and more of these supportive and learning institutes and organisations are continuing to close. Running these creative learning and supportive institutes are expensive. Although, as it is, the art of jewellery making, particularly contemporary jewellery, is a minority within Australia's arts industry. Without these organisations and educational facilities it is even more difficult for our small creative community to thrive within Australia's creative culture.

The jewellery and metalsmithing community needs the more support from the government in order to keep the small businesses, galleries organisations and learning institutes afloat. Which in turn will lead to maintaining Australia's vibrant culture.