

Australian Craft and Design Centres (ACDC) Network

Submission - National Cultural Policy

We are a nation of makers.

Creating opportunities for makers is at the core of what we do.

As *Artificial Intelligence* reshapes the world - sustaining the original and handmade is critical. We believe this new environment will also drive an increased interest in and demand for the authentic and artisanal. This is already becoming evident, with Australian makers gaining international recognition - including in the Loewe Craft Prize and Premio Arteria Venice Glass Week.

Our craft and design sector is built upon the traditions of the First Australians and the many new Australians who have enriched this country with their skills. Sustaining these traditions and skills remains critical to our national identity and social cohesion, and highlights our uniqueness in an increasingly homogenised world. While culturally and socially important, it also has a significant economic dimension.

This submission seeks to position our unique sector to respond to these new challenges by focussing on three key areas:

Pillar 3 The Centrality of the Artist

The *Creative Workplace Scoping Study Report* highlighted an acute shortage of designers and makers and noted the loss of specialist education and training as impediments to addressing participation, workforce demand and industry potential.

Investing in skills and training pathways grows the community of makers and designers whose locally produced work keeps money in Australian communities, and builds the market for design-led artisan manufacture. The Government's *Creative Workplaces* initiative has been important in the provision of critical support and advice. There is now an opportunity to build upon this work.

We propose the development of a 10 year workforce plan which supports skills and training pathways for crafts people and designers.

Pillar 4. Strong Institutions

Craft and design infrastructure in Australia is fragile and limited. ACDC members play a vital and essential role as the backbone of the nation's craft and design ecosystem,

underpinning the career development and business sustainability of makers. We invest in long-term market development, training and professional development and in the development of links with other sectors such as Tourism and Manufacturing. Strong national infrastructure supports makers to keep making locally, and that matters economically and environmentally. The imminent closure of the Australian Design Centre further weakens the sector.

We propose the establishment of a dedicated structure within Creative Australia to support Australia's designers and makers - a new body that can work in partnership with us on a strategic whole-of-sector approach to achieve the sector's potential.

Pillar 5. Reaching the Audience

Research consistently demonstrates that hands-on creative participation reduces stress, builds social connection, and supports mental health and wellbeing. Reaching wider audiences is both a market development opportunity, and an investment in wellbeing and social cohesion. The uniqueness of the craft and design sector has been undervalued, and there is significant, unrealised commercial potential.

We propose a market development strategy to increase exports, grow audiences and promote Australia as a cultural tourism destination, with support for export market development and representation at international trade events such as Milan Design Week and international residencies and exchange.