Mapping Australia's Crafts Sector







2026

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Content warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this report may contain images and names of deceased persons.

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Acknowledgement of Country: The Australian Crafts Alliance acknowledges the Wadawurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which this report was researched, written and produced in Geelong. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and recognise the continuing authority of First Nations peoples over their cultures, knowledge, practices and heritage.

We also acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Countries represented throughout this report, and the communities whose knowledge, making and cultural practices continue to sustain living heritage across Australia.

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The Australian Crafts Alliance extends its sincere thanks to every person and organisation who gave time to this project. The report has deliberately brought together work that is usually separated across arts, trades, manufacturing, design, education, heritage, regional development and industry. Doing that has required the same kind of cooperation the report ultimately argues is necessary for the sector itself: craftsmanship and provenance cannot be safeguarded by practitioners alone. Their continuity depends upon practitioners, enterprises, producer groups, educators, governments, collecting institutions, cultural organisations and communities working together.

This report also stands on the work of those who mapped Australian craft before us. In particular, it builds on *Mapping the Australian Craft Sector* by Heath and Pascoe (2014) and the later national work of Susan Luckman and Ash Tower in *The Value of Craft Skills to the Future of Making in Australia* (2023). Those studies provided an essential foundation from which this report has been able to extend the national account into craftsmanship, transmission, productive capability, provenance and geographical origin.

International collaboration

A special acknowledgement is extended to the European Crafts Alliance and the Craft & Industrial Geographical Indications Expert Working Group. European craft organisations have spent many years doing the difficult institutional work that Australia is only beginning: defining the sector, organising producers, strengthening transmission, developing craft and industrial geographical indications, connecting craft with economic and regional policy, and responding to the demands of digital product information and international trade. The European Crafts Alliance generously provided material directly to the Australian Crafts Alliance for this report, including evidence concerning the new European GI framework and the importance of protecting local knowledge, employment and productive identity.

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First Nations cultural authority

The Australian Crafts Alliance acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander craft, making, design and material knowledge are living cultural practices whose authority remains with the relevant First Nations knowledge holders and communities.

This report recognises that First Nations cultural knowledge, authority and heritage require protections distinct from general intellectual property, certification and provenance systems. Cultural authority, consent, attribution, access and decisions about what may be recorded, disclosed or reused must remain with the relevant knowledge holders and communities.

The report also draws on UNESCO's work on the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, particularly its recognition that living heritage is sustained through people, practice and transmission as well as through material objects.

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The Australian Crafts Alliance sincerely thanks the practitioners, organisations, families, photographers, researchers and institutions who contributed information, reviewed case-study material, supplied imagery or granted permission for material to be reproduced in this report.

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Helen Kaminski's Master Craftsman, Garry Bishop | Image: Helen Kaminski



Simon Martin | Simon Martin Whips & Leathercraft | Image: Jasper De Seymour

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Preamble

Australian craft is present across the economy but rarely visible as a coherent sector. Its practitioners work in studios, workshops, farms, factories, construction sites, training institutions and community settings. Their knowledge supports the making, modification, repair and conservation of products across textiles, ceramics, glass, jewellery, timber, metal, leather, food and related fields. Public systems generally classify this work separately as art, trade, manufacturing, heritage, education or small business. This fragmentation obscures the relationships among skilled material practice, productive labour, transmission, place and provenance.

This report provides a national account of those relationships. It builds on *Mapping the Australian Craft Sector* (Heath and Pascoe, 2014) and *The Value of Craft Skills to the Future of Making in Australia* (Luckman and Tower, 2023), extending that research through a sector framework that brings practitioners, enterprises, workshops, institutions, materials, production systems and markets into the same field of analysis. Its concern is the capacity through which material knowledge is learned, exercised and transmitted, and the conditions under which skilled production and the resulting claims of craftsmanship and provenance can be recognised and verified.

The evidence identifies substantial productive, economic, social and cultural value alongside fragmented workforce data, weakened training pathways, threatened skills and limited provenance infrastructure. International systems demonstrate how practitioner recognition, vocational progression, living-heritage protection and geographical indications can connect skilled production to durable institutions. Australia's emerging geographical-indication arrangements provide one current policy opportunity within this broader task. The report establishes the evidence base and common language required for national recognition of the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector.



Executive Summary

Craft skills support a substantial Australian workforce and productive economy. Luckman and Tower (2023) identified 116,538 people employed in craft-skill occupations in 2021, equivalent to 1.1 per cent of the national workforce, and estimated their gross value added at $19.2 billion, or 1.0 per cent of the economy. The work extends across textiles, ceramics, glass, jewellery, leather, timber, metal, food, repair, conservation, construction and advanced manufacturing.

No Australian statistical system identifies this activity as one sector. The Occupation Standard Classification for Australia distributes practitioners among visual arts, trades, manufacturing, repair and technical occupations. Industry classifications follow the principal activity of an enterprise, while cultural statistics commonly combine visual arts and crafts. Each system measures a legitimate part of the economy, but their combined effect is to obscure the relationships among material practice, skilled labour, production, transmission and provenance (ABS, 2024a).

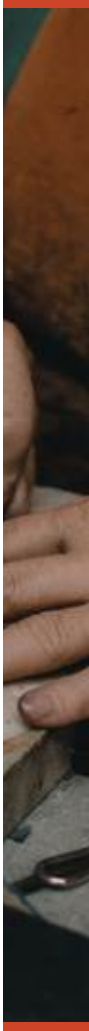
This report defines the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector as a trade, industry, workforce and living-heritage sector constituted through Craft Practitioners, enterprises, workshops, institutions, materials, processes, products, markets and the transmission relationships that sustain them. Craft names the practice, field and category of product. Craftsmanship is the demonstrable quality of making that arises when learned and embodied knowledge is applied through skilled human judgement at one or more consequential stages of making, modifying, repairing or conserving a product, including through the transformation, assembly or treatment of materials, ingredients or existing objects, such that the practitioner's judgement materially affects the process or outcome. Classification as craft does not, by itself, determine the level of craftsmanship demonstrated, which is assessed separately against the standards of the relevant practice.

The evidence reveals a sector with substantial productive capability but weak institutional visibility. Domestic fibre and textile production has lost critical intermediate processes. Technical and Further Education (TAFE), university and workplace pathways have contracted across several material fields. Many practitioners operate through sole-trader and micro-enterprise structures with low or irregular practice income and limited social protection. Migrant and First Nations knowledge, regional production ecologies and informal transmission remain poorly captured by occupational and industry data. The market frequently presents products with different makers, materials, methods and places of production as equivalent because verified provenance is unavailable at the point of comparison.

International systems demonstrate the practical effects of institutional recognition. Japan links designated regional production traditions with separate practitioner recognition. Germany and Austria provide advanced master-level vocational qualifications, trade institutions and recognised responsibility for apprenticeship. Switzerland connects workplace learning, occupational standards and professional progression. *The Harris Tweed Act 1993* protects a textile through defined material, place and process requirements. Regulation (EU) 2023/2411 establishes a public collective right for qualifying craft and industrial product names. These systems perform different functions, but each makes a relationship among people, knowledge, production and place visible through an institution capable of recognising and verifying it.

The report's proposed framework follows from these findings. It separates practitioner recognition, atelier recognition, product or process assessment, provenance registration and geographical-origin protection while allowing verified evidence to be reused across them. A Craft Practitioner may work commercially or non-commercially and at any stage of development. Within agricultural and agrifood fields, the Artisan Producer classification identifies qualifying small-scale production through field-specific scale or volume limits and continued producer responsibility at consequential production stages. A Maker's Mark, linked to a Unique Provenance Identifier, attributes a verified practitioner's contribution. Provenance records the documented chain connecting product, materials or ingredients, maker or producer, place, method, knowledge lineage and subsequent custody or use. A geographical indication protects a qualifying name and place-linked specification rather than an individual maker.

The report recommends national recognition and repeatable measurement of the sector; stronger vocational, workplace and school pathways, including recognition of migrant practitioners' existing skills; support for transmission and threatened skills; a statutory route for craft and industrial geographical indications; connected practitioner, product and provenance infrastructure, with staged development of interoperability with emerging Digital Product Passport requirements; improved origin disclosure and procurement; and protection for First Nations Cultural Authority and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property. Together these measures would allow skilled material production to be measured, transmitted and valued as productive capability rather than remain dispersed across policy portfolios.





Leila Naja Hibri, then Chief Executive Officer
Australian Fashion Council, quoted in Harper’s BAZAAR Australia (Huntington, 2022).



Bula'Bula Arts master weavers Mary Dhapalany (left) and Evonne Munuyngu collect pandanus leaves for their collaboration with MAARA Collective | Image: Julie Shaw, MAARA Collective

A NOTE ON TERMS

Craftsmanship requires particular treatment because no single cross-sector definition supplies criteria sufficient for classification, certification and provenance frameworks. General dictionaries describe craftsmanship as skill in making or the quality of well-made work; UNESCO (n.d.-b) locates traditional craftsmanship primarily in the knowledge and skills held and transmitted by practitioners; and scholarship records persistent difficulty distinguishing craftsmanship from ordinary manufacture.

Luckman and Andrew (2020, p. 139), quoting Pye (1995, p. 20), capture this boundary problem: "nobody … is prepared to say where craftsmanship ends and ordinary manufacture begins." The operational definition adopted here provides a common basis for the report's classification, certification and provenance frameworks. Its application requires field-specific criteria, evidence requirements and assessment procedures.

For the purposes of this report, knowledge and skill are the intangible capability. Transmission is the process through which that capability is learned, renewed and passed on. Craft is the material practice through which the capability is exercised. A product may be a tangible manifestation of that capability. Craftsmanship is the demonstrable quality with which the capability is applied. Provenance records the connections among practitioner, capability, transmission, materials or ingredients, process, place and product, together with the evidence supporting those connections.

> "nobody … is prepared to say where craftsmanship ends and ordinary manufacture begins."
>
> David Pye, 1995



Charlotte Litteck | Solace I | Huon pine
Image: Charlotte Litteck.
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TRANSMISSION

Transmission is the process through which knowledge and skills are communicated, learned, embodied, renewed and passed between practitioners and across generations. It may occur through apprenticeship, teaching, observation, demonstration, supervised practice, oral instruction or participation in a community of practice, supported where appropriate by documentation.

Transmission is distinct from the capability being transmitted. Knowledge and skill constitute the intangible capability held and exercised by practitioners; transmission is the process that enables that capability to continue. Transmission may preserve an established practice while also allowing it to adapt to changes in materials, tools, technologies and social contexts.

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) includes transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, among its recognised safeguarding measures. UNESCO's (n.d.-b) guidance on traditional craftsmanship similarly directs safeguarding towards enabling artisans to continue making and to pass their knowledge and skills to others, particularly within their communities (UNESCO, n.d.-b, 2003).

Transmission sustains craft knowledge, skills and practices at community and sectoral levels. An individual product may demonstrate technical craftsmanship without its practitioner personally teaching others. In the Craftsmanship Star Rating (CSR) Framework, Heritage and transmission concerns the living knowledge connected with the work and the relationships through which capability continues to be learned, renewed and passed on. Apprenticeship, mentoring, supervised learning and community practice can explain that continuity (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026b).

"It can be passed on only by example from master to apprentice."

Michael Polanyi, 1958



CRAFTSMANSHIP

Craftsmanship is the demonstrable quality of making that arises when learned and embodied knowledge is applied through skilled human judgement at one or more consequential stages of making, modifying, repairing or conserving a product, including through the transformation, assembly or treatment of materials, ingredients or existing objects, such that the practitioner's judgement materially affects the process or outcome.

Craftsmanship is assessed against standards recognised within the relevant practice. These may include command of materials or ingredients, tools and processes; technical accuracy and control; informed judgement, adaptation and problem-solving; consistency appropriate to the intended outcome; fitness for purpose; and, where applicable, recognised aesthetic or sensory criteria and cultural protocols. The relevant criteria and level of attainment must be specified for each field. Assessment may include inspection of the finished product, supported by evidence of production and performance appropriate to the claim; price and promotional descriptions do not establish the standard attained.

This definition draws upon UNESCO's (n.d.-b) treatment of traditional craftsmanship as intangible cultural heritage concerned primarily with practitioners' knowledge and skills, their continued practice and their transmission within communities (UNESCO, n.d.-b, 2003). A product is a tangible outcome through which that capability may be manifested. Its craftsmanship is assessed against the standards of the relevant practice, supported where necessary by evidence concerning production and provenance. In the Craftsmanship Star Rating Framework, Heritage and transmission concerns the living knowledge connected with the work and the relationships sustaining its practice and continuation. UNESCO provides the safeguarding rationale; the Framework gives these relationships a place within consumer information about the product (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026b).

The definition does not require novelty, genius, sole authorship, exclusive hand-making, small-scale production or the absence of machinery. Traditional repetition, collaborative production, repair, artisanal food production and machine-assisted making may all demonstrate craftsmanship where learned human knowledge and consequential judgement materially influence the making or its result. Conversely, handmade status, extended labour or the presence of Pye's workmanship of risk does not by itself establish craftsmanship of a high standard.

The definition synthesises three complementary scholarly traditions. Sennett (2008) identifies craftsmanship with the commitment to doing work well; Pye distinguishes the workmanship of risk, in which the quality of the result depends upon judgement, dexterity and care exercised during making, from the workmanship of certainty, in which the result is predetermined; and MacIntyre (1981) explains how practices contain standards of excellence that are internal to, and recognised within, the relevant practice. None provides a complete certification test independently, but together they support an evaluative definition based on learned capability, consequential judgement and practice-specific standards (Sennett, 2008; Pye, 1995; MacIntyre, 1981).

CRAFT

Craft is the material practice of making, modifying, repairing or conserving tangible products through the handling, transformation, assembly or treatment of materials, ingredients or existing objects. The term also denotes the fields in which that practice occurs and the products that result. Those products may provide tangible manifestations of the knowledge and skills involved in their production.

For the purposes of this report, craft includes textiles, ceramics, glass, jewellery, timber, metal, leather, paper, food and related fields. Craft processes may be manual, tool-assisted, digital or mechanical. Classification as craft requires substantive application of learned material knowledge and practical skill within the process. The level of craftsmanship demonstrated is assessed separately against the relevant field standards. Adamson's (2013) formulation emphasises skilled hand-making; this report adopts a broader operational scope encompassing tool-assisted and machine-assisted practice.

Craft names the practice, field and category of product. Craftsmanship names the evaluative quality or standard demonstrated in its making.

This report's sectoral use of craft includes artisanal food and beverage production. This is broader than the legal scope of the European Union's system for geographical indications for craft and industrial products, which excludes agricultural products, foodstuffs, wines and spirit drinks. Those products remain subject to their respective geographical-indication regimes.

CRAFT AS TRADE

Craft as trade refers to skilled productive practice operating within economic and workforce systems through employment, enterprise, commission, production and exchange, in which material knowledge, technical capability and consequential human judgement contribute directly to productive activity.

In this report, the term provides a cross-sector economic and workforce frame connecting skilled practice, enterprise, employment, training, transmission and productive capability across material fields. It distinguishes the economic and workforce function of craft from its classification solely as cultural, recreational or artistic activity, without requiring every instance of craft practice to be commercially undertaken.

"Whenever a skilled person makes something with their hands, that's craft."

Glenn Adamson, 2021



CRAFT CONSERVATION

Craft Conservation is the conservation, safeguarding and renewal of the tangible and intangible conditions through which craft capability is maintained and transmitted. It encompasses the learned knowledge, know-how, skill and consequential judgement of practitioners; the transmission relationships through which these capabilities are acquired; the materials, tools, workshops and practice-specific standards through which craft is exercised; and the tangible objects, structures and other manifestations through which that capability is expressed, maintained, repaired or restored.

Craft conservation recognises that the continuity of craft heritage cannot be secured through preservation of tangible objects alone. It includes measures that sustain living capability and transmission, including apprenticeship and training, documentation supporting practical learning and transmission, continued practice, maintenance and repair, conservation-restoration, access to materials and infrastructure, and the social and economic conditions necessary for practitioners and practices to remain viable.

In this report, the term is used in an expanded operational sense, building on international conservation and intangible-cultural-heritage approaches that recognise the relationship between tangible manifestations, practitioner knowledge and skills, and their continued transmission.

CRAFT PRACTITIONER

A Craft Practitioner is a person actively engaged in a field of craft. This may include making, modifying, repairing or conserving products; undertaking one or more consequential stages of production; or transmitting the knowledge and skills of a practice where that transmission is grounded in practical capability.

The term describes participation in a field rather than occupational status, rank or a guarantee of quality. A Craft Practitioner may work commercially or non-commercially and may be at any stage of practice or professional development. The level of craftsmanship demonstrated must be assessed separately against the standards of the relevant practice.

The use of tools, digital technologies, machinery or standardised procedures does not automatically exclude a person from this classification. The relevant question is whether the practitioner substantively applies craft knowledge, skill or consequential judgement within the process.

Safeguarding traditional craftsmanship means creating the conditions for artisans to keep making, rather than preserving craft objects alone.

Adapted from UNESCO (n.d.-b), Traditional craftsmanship, Intangible Cultural Heritage.



CRAFT CONSERVATOR

A Craft Conservator is a practitioner or conservation specialist undertaking work specifically directed towards the continuity of craft capability or the care of its tangible manifestations. This may include conservation, restoration, repair, documentation, the recovery of endangered processes or organised transmission of knowledge and skills at risk of loss.

In this report, the term recognises that conservation may operate through both the care of tangible heritage and the continuation of the intangible capability required to make, understand, maintain and renew it. It describes a function within the craft ecosystem and does not displace established professional conservation-restoration qualifications, accreditation or occupational titles.

ARTISAN PRODUCER

An Artisan Producer is an individual or enterprise engaged in small-scale agricultural, agrifood, craft food or beverage production, within applicable field-specific scale or volume limits, while retaining direct responsibility for one or more consequential stages of production.

For the purposes of this report, Artisan Producer is a scale-and-production classification applied specifically within agricultural and agrifood fields. It encompasses qualifying small-scale growers and primary producers, together with cheesemakers, bakers, preservers, chocolatiers, smallgoods producers, brewers, distillers and other producers working with agricultural materials or ingredients within the report's agricultural and agrifood scope. It is not used as a general classification for enterprises producing textiles, ceramics, furniture, jewellery, glass or other material-based craft products, which are recorded through the report's Craft Practitioner and enterprise classifications.

The classification requires continuing producer responsibility for decisions that materially determine the product. Depending on the field, these may include cultivation or ingredient selection, preparation, fermentation, blending, maturation, temperature control, preservation, sensory assessment, batch approval, storage and release. Production may be undertaken by one person or organised through an enterprise employing staff, using specialist equipment or contracting a defined processing stage.

Small-scale production is constitutive of the classification. Where an applicable field-specific threshold exists, it should be identified; where none exists, the report proposes its development through field-specific evidence and consultation. Products made through different ingredients, processes and regulatory systems cannot be assessed through a single national threshold. Queensland's artisan producer liquor licence provides an Australian precedent by applying separate annual production limits to craft beer and artisan spirits (Queensland Government, 2023).

The classification also provides a basis for identifying Artisan Producers within place-based producer groups. Where relevant, producer records may be connected with ingredient origin, production location, shared product specifications and applications for geographical-indication protection.

PROVENANCE

Provenance is the documented chain, supported by evidence whose verification status is recorded, connecting a tangible product or object to its materials or ingredients, maker or producer, place and method of production; the lineage through which the knowledge and skills required to make it were acquired and transmitted; and its subsequent distribution, ownership, custody and use, together with its documented oral histories and cultural meanings. A provenance registry records these connections, their supporting evidence and any gaps, disputes or uncertainty.

This report's inclusion of knowledge transmission within provenance is informed by UNESCO's (n.d.-b) treatment of traditional craftsmanship as a tangible manifestation of intangible cultural heritage and its emphasis on continued making and transmission (UNESCO, n.d.-b). Knowledge transmission is recorded as an integral dimension of provenance rather than as contextual information separate from the product (UNESCO, n.d.-b).

MAKER'S MARK

Within this report, a Maker's Mark is a unique and persistent individual identifier assigned to a verified practitioner and applied to, or securely associated with, a tangible product, its packaging, accompanying documentation or provenance record. It links the product to the practitioner and attributes that practitioner's contribution to its production. Where making is collaborative, a product may be associated with more than one Maker's Mark.

Within the proposed registry, the verified practitioner record is assigned a Unique Provenance Identifier (UPI). The Maker's Mark is the practitioner-facing expression of that identifier when it is applied to or securely associated with a product.

The registry verifies the identity associated with the mark, while the linked product record documents the practitioner's attributed contribution and the evidence supporting it. The mark alone does not certify the product's quality, geographical origin, materials, production method or level of craftsmanship. Those claims require supporting provenance evidence or separate certification. A Maker's Mark attributes a practitioner's contribution; a Geographical Indication protects the use of a qualifying geographical name for goods complying with the applicable origin requirements.

"While we pass through our creative lives, our hallmarks not only represent quality, they live on as a record of what we achieved."

Russ Elliott, 2017



GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (GI)

A Geographical Indication is a name or sign identifying a good as originating in a specific region where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is attributable to that geographical origin.

In Australia, geographical indications may be protected as certification trade marks under the Trade Marks Act 1995 (Cth). Wine geographical indications are protected through a separate statutory system under the Wine Australia Act 2013 (Cth) and recorded in the Register of Protected Geographical Indications and Other Terms maintained by Wine Australia.

Negotiations for the Australia–European Union Free Trade Agreement concluded on 24 March 2026. Under the concluded agreement, Australia has committed to developing a system for protecting geographical indications for food and spirit products. That agreement remains subject to signature, domestic treaty processes and entry into force (DFAT, 2026a, 2026b).

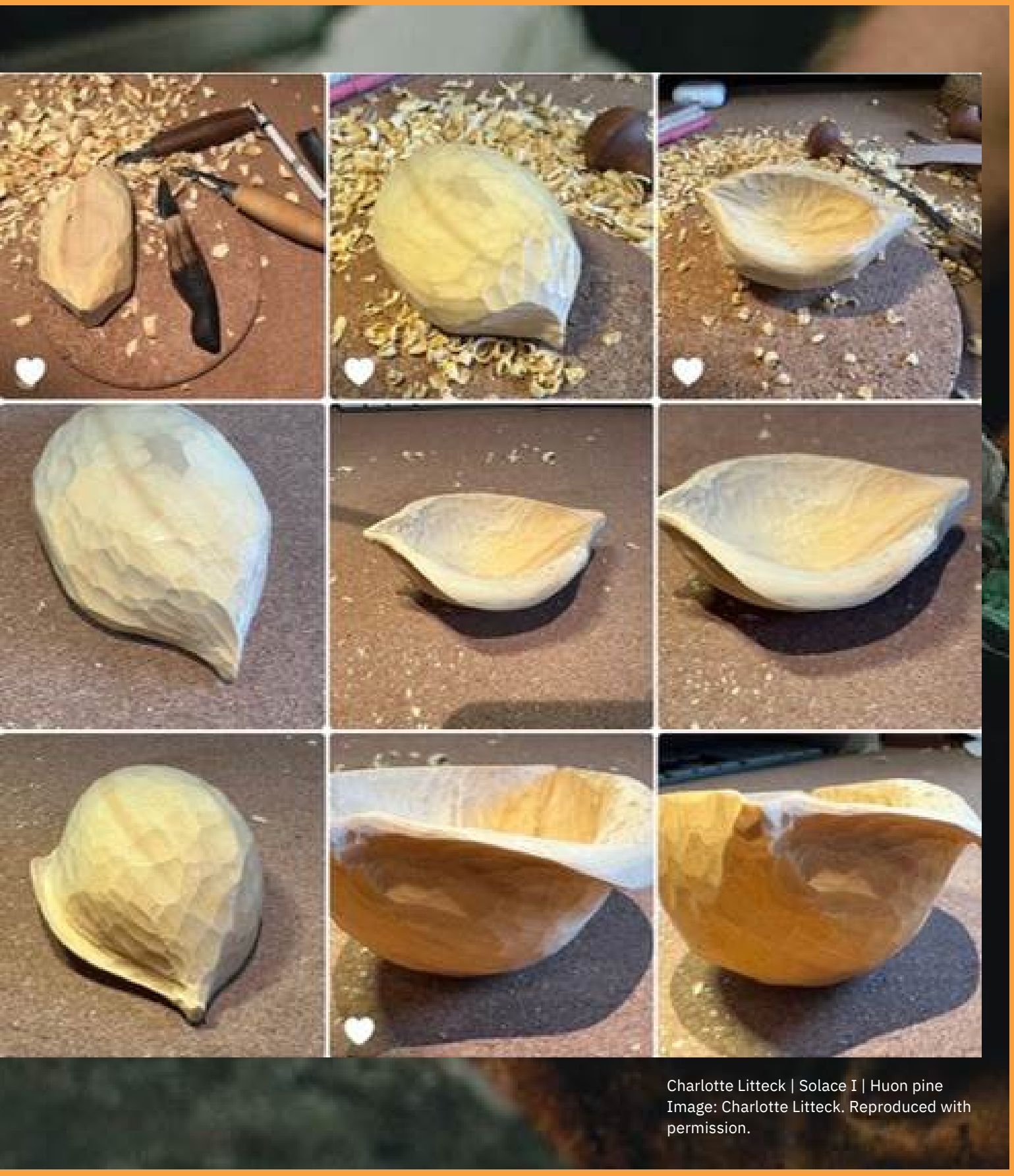
A geographical indication protects the geographical name or indication and its use for qualifying goods. It does not identify an individual maker. Nor does it establish a particular level of craftsmanship unless relevant production or quality requirements form part of the applicable product specification and compliance with those requirements is verified. GI registration is a legal process separate from registration in a provenance registry.

CRAFT AND INDUSTRIAL GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (CIGI)

Under the European Union system, a Craft and Industrial Geographical Indication (CIGI) is a registered geographical indication protecting the name of a craft or industrial product whose given quality, reputation or other characteristic is essentially attributable to its geographical origin. The right may be exercised by all eligible producers within the defined geographical area who comply with the applicable product specification. The European Union established its CIGI registration and protection system under Regulation (EU) 2023/2411, which has applied since 1 December 2025.

To qualify, the product must originate in a specific place, region or country; a given quality, reputation or other characteristic must be essentially attributable to that geographical origin; and at least one production step must take place within the defined geographical area. The system encompasses products made entirely by hand, products made with manual, digital or mechanical tools where manual contribution is important, and industrial products made through standardised or machine-based production.

CIGI protection applies to craft and industrial products and is legally distinct from the European Union regimes governing agricultural products and foodstuffs, wines and spirit drinks. Australia does not currently have a dedicated statutory registration system equivalent to the European Union CIGI regime. Geographical names associated with Australian craft and industrial products may be protected as certification trade marks under the Trade Marks Act 1995 (Cth). The rules governing a certification trade mark may specify requirements concerning geographical origin, materials, production methods, standards and verification. This route is legally and structurally different from the European Union's dedicated CIGI register and public collective right.



Charlotte Litteck | Solace I | Huon pine
Image: Charlotte Litteck. Reproduced with permission.

Research Design and Methods

RESEARCH PURPOSE

This report examines how craft, craftsmanship, practitioners, products, production processes, provenance, transmission and geographical origin are recognised and measured in Australia. It maps their representation in occupational, industry, cultural and economic data; examines the legal, regulatory and institutional instruments that recognise or protect people, practices and products; and compares those arrangements with relevant international systems. The analysis identifies the institutional gaps affecting sector recognition, measurement, skills transmission, provenance and origin protection and develops policy options from the evidence.

The research combines documentary and comparative analysis with synthesis and critical interpretation of published quantitative findings and explanatory case studies. Documentary analysis was selected because classification, measurement and recognition are produced through legal instruments, statistical standards, registers, government programs, institutional records and industry systems. The report uses practitioner surveys and interviews undertaken in earlier national studies as existing evidence about workforce conditions, participation and economic contribution rather than presenting a new population survey (Bowen, 2009; Heath and Pascoe, 2014; Luckman and Tower, 2023).

The documentary review was structured and iterative. It was designed to compare definitions, classifications, evidentiary requirements and institutional functions across the systems examined. The quantitative component examines published research and official statistics, retaining each source's population, reference year, methodology and limitations. No new census tabulation or economic-impact model was undertaken, so the report preserves the populations, reference years and limitations of each source rather than combining unlike figures.

The proposed recognition, certification and provenance arrangements are policy architecture. Their implementation requires practitioner and industry consultation, field-specific standards, assessor requirements, governance and conflict-of-interest controls, review and renewal processes, consumer testing, pilot assessment and legal scrutiny.

SOURCE BASE AND DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS

The core documentary review covers sources from 1923 to 17 August 2026 and includes legislation, treaties, judgments, intellectual property records, official registers, government and intergovernmental publications, statistics, peer-reviewed scholarship, industry research, museum and archival collections, company materials and contemporaneous reporting. Selected updates, including the publicly described program of the proposed Future Textiles CRC, were verified to October 2026. Sources were identified through legal, government, intellectual property, statistical, scholarly, library, industry, museum, archival, company and news repositories, supplemented by citation tracing.

Primary legal and administrative sources were given priority, followed by official government and intergovernmental publications, official statistics, peer-reviewed scholarship and established research reports. Industry, company, museum and media sources were used where they supplied historical or operational evidence unavailable elsewhere. Company claims remain attributed. Documents were assessed for authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning, including their purpose, evidentiary basis and institutional context (Scott, 1990).

Material findings were compared across source types where possible. Company histories were checked against trade mark registrations, judgments, archives, government publications and contemporaneous reporting. Applicable legal instruments, official registers and judgments were treated as authoritative for their respective legal and administrative questions. Gaps and unresolved discrepancies are stated through attribution and precise wording.

COMPARATIVE LEGAL AND POLICY ANALYSIS

Japan, Italy, the United Kingdom and the European Union were selected as principal comparator systems because each demonstrates a distinct institutional function. Japan recognises designated traditional craft products and eligible practitioners through separate mechanisms. Italy regulates the artisan enterprise and provides regional forms of master-artisan recognition. The Harris Tweed Act defines place, materials, process and producer eligibility for a protected textile. The European Union provides a cross-sector registration system for craft and industrial geographical indications.

The comparison follows function rather than institutional equivalence. It examines what each mechanism regulates, how eligibility is defined, what evidence is required, who administers and enforces it, what an authorised user may claim and how compliance is maintained. Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Slovenia and France provide additional evidence on vocational formation, advanced practitioner recognition, occupational classification, origin disclosure and institutional support. International evidence is used where it demonstrates a specific mechanism, classification difference or measurable outcome relevant to Australian conditions.

MEASUREMENT OF SECTOR SIZE

National estimates depend on occupational and industry proxies because Australian statistical collections do not identify the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector as a complete field. Luckman and Tower (2023) estimate approximately 116,538 craft-skilled workers and $19.2 billion in gross value added. These figures describe the population and economic activity captured by their classification and estimation methods, rather than a complete count of the sector as defined in this report. Australia introduced the Occupation Standard Classification for Australia in December 2024 to replace the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) for Australian statistics (ABS, 2024a).

The aggregate estimate is considered alongside Heath and Pascoe's (2014) mapping of participation, infrastructure and markets; Throsby and Petetskaya's (2024) longitudinal study of practising professional artists; McQuilten et al.'s (2025) study of visual-arts work and income, within which craft forms a component; and official participation, occupation, industry and cultural-economy data. These sources measure different populations and reference years. They are reported separately and used together to identify the sector's scale, distribution and classification gaps.

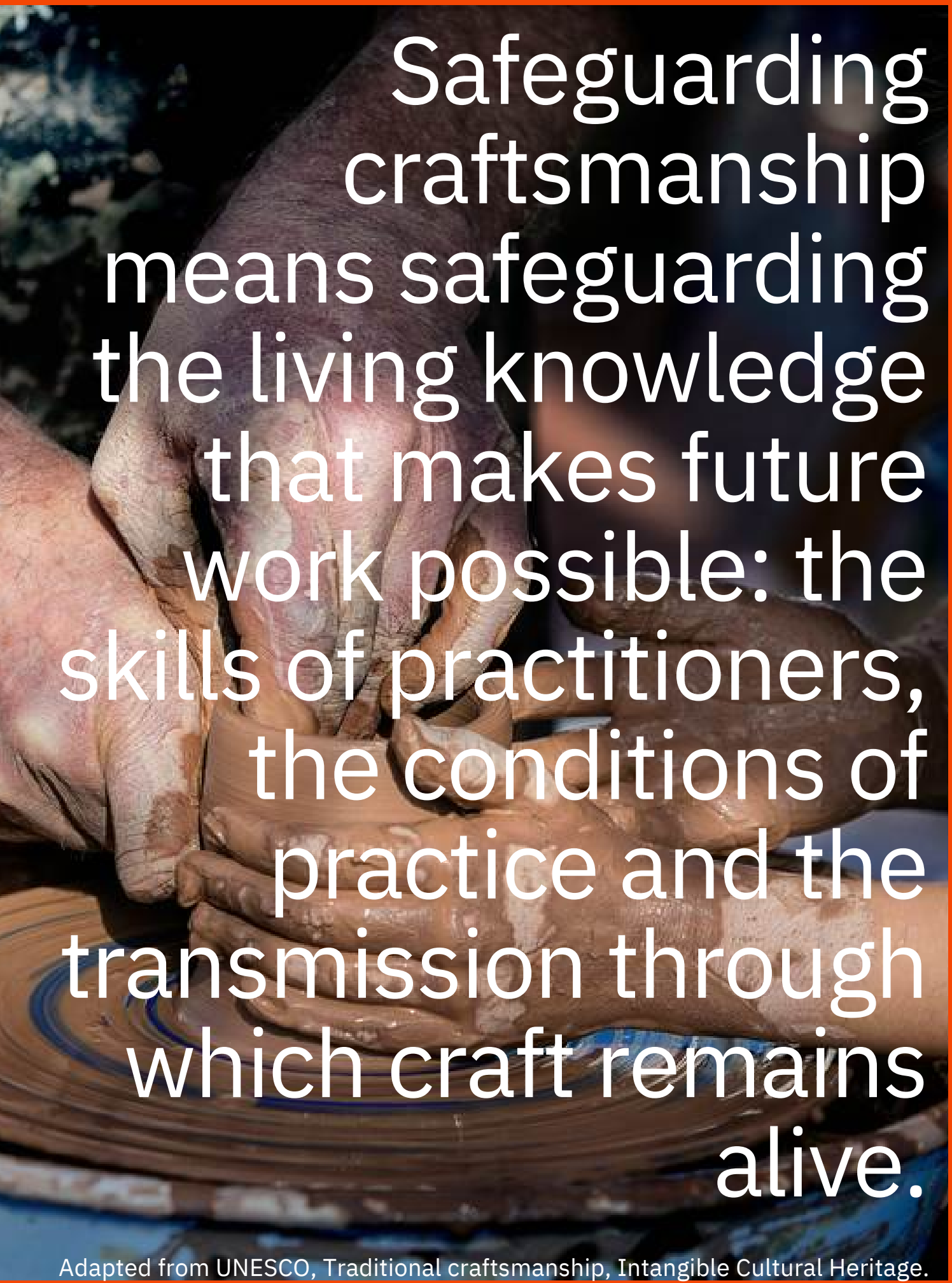
CASE STUDIES

The report contains 14 numbered case studies selected for their capacity to demonstrate mechanisms affecting practitioner recognition, craftsmanship, transmission, provenance, production, trade marks, geographical origin or ownership. The cases include individual practitioners, family enterprises, manufacturers, training and transmission infrastructure, litigation, collective rights, international comparisons and contested Australian product histories. Each case was required to have a publicly traceable evidentiary record and a material connection to the surrounding analysis.

Cases were developed through documentary research. Selected drafts were provided to practitioners, enterprises or responsible custodians for factual review, with targeted confirmation sought on dates, ownership, production, materials, practitioner roles, workforce composition, skill transmission, subcontracting and provenance. Cases developed without external factual review remain attributed to their documentary sources. The cases explain how institutional mechanisms operate and do not supply a statistical sample of the sector.

Author and institutional interests

The author is the founder of the Australian Crafts Alliance and the Creative Women's Association. ACA publishes this report and CWA provides its secretariat. The report discusses industry frameworks developed by these organisations alongside independent research and public policy instruments. Their roles are identified so that readers can distinguish published evidence, existing industry activity and the report's policy recommendations.



Safeguarding craftsmanship means safeguarding the living knowledge that makes future work possible: the skills of practitioners, the conditions of practice and the transmission through which craft remains alive.

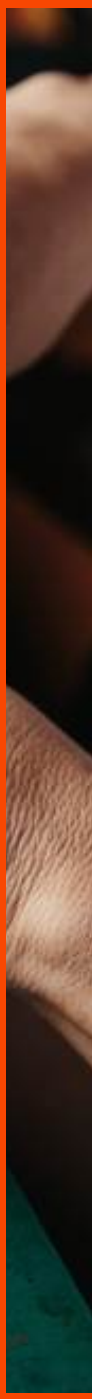
Adapted from UNESCO, Traditional craftsmanship, Intangible Cultural Heritage.

1

Craftsmanship and Sector Definitions

“Traditional craftsmanship is perhaps the most tangible manifestation of intangible cultural heritage.”

UNESCO, n.d.-b
Traditional craftsmanship, Intangible Cultural Heritage



1.1 NATIONAL CRAFT RESEARCH

National research has progressively widened the way Australian craft is understood, from a professional field located principally within cultural policy to a much broader body of skilled material work distributed across arts, trades, manufacturing, repair and enterprise. The Committee of Enquiry into the Crafts in Australia (1975) examined craft as a professional activity, surveying 1,205 practitioners and examining education, working conditions, production, organisations and markets.

Subsequent national studies developed different parts of this picture. Research into visual and craft artists in 1989 and 1995 and the 2002 Contemporary Visual Arts and Craft Inquiry examined professional practice, training, income and institutional support within the arts and cultural-policy environment. Together, these studies provide a historical record of professional artistic practice within the populations and categories through which craft was then institutionally located (Prosser, 1989; Arts Training Australia, 1995; Commonwealth of Australia, 2002).

Heath and Pascoe's (2014) Mapping the Australian Craft Sector provided a substantial national account of contemporary craft practice, organisations, infrastructure and markets. Produced for the National Craft Initiative in 2014, it combined an online survey of 644 sector stakeholders, 46 interviews and documentary research. It examined practitioner income, training, infrastructure, market channels and regulation and documented the central role of sole traders, micro-enterprises and distributed support organisations in sustaining practice (Heath and Pascoe, 2014).

Luckman and Tower (2023) extended the analysis through an occupational framework identifying craft skills exercised across the economy. Their 2023 study estimated 116,538 workers and $19.2 billion in gross value added for Australia's craft economy in 2021, using its defined classification and estimation methods. Its wider occupational lens makes manufacturing, repair, technical and trade capability visible alongside practices more readily captured through arts policy.

United Kingdom research provides a useful methodological parallel. Craft in an Age of Change mapped makers and craft professionals across all four UK nations, while later Crafts Council research measured craft occupations inside and outside industries classified primarily as craft. Measuring the Craft Economy and Who Makes? demonstrated the value of combining industry and occupation data to reveal skilled makers embedded across the wider economy (BOP Consulting, 2012; Crafts Council, 2014, 2018).

Taken together, this research establishes craft as a field whose measured scale changes with the unit of analysis. A robust Australian framework requires clear separation between participation, professional practice, craft-skilled employment, enterprise activity and product-level craftsmanship, supported by a sector definition capable of following skilled material work across institutional boundaries.

1.2 TRADITIONAL CRAFTSMANSHIP UNDER UNESCO

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) provides an established international framework for understanding traditional craftsmanship as living knowledge. Article 2 identifies traditional craftsmanship as one of five broad domains of intangible cultural heritage and defines safeguarding through measures including identification, documentation, research, protection, promotion, transmission through formal and non-formal education, and revitalisation (UNESCO, 2003). UNESCO (n.d.-b) describes traditional craftsmanship as perhaps the most tangible manifestation of intangible cultural heritage while locating the principal safeguarding interest in the knowledge and skills through which craft is practised and transmitted.

Under UNESCO's framing, attention falls on the knowledge and skills through which objects are made, maintained and renewed, and on the conditions that allow that practice to continue. UNESCO's (n.d.-b) account encompasses tools, clothing, jewellery, ritual and decorative objects, musical instruments, household utensils, toys and forms of making associated with shelter, storage, transport and cultural practice. Their continuity depends on practitioners who understand materials, tools, sequences, standards and culturally governed methods and who can transmit that knowledge to others (UNESCO, n.d.-b).

The safeguarding model also connects cultural continuity with productive conditions. UNESCO (2016) identifies apprenticeship and teacher–learner relationships, access to raw materials, viable markets, community participation and appropriate intellectual-property measures as mechanisms through which traditional craftsmanship can continue. UNESCO's Register of Good Safeguarding Practices includes programmes connecting transmission with productive workshops, education and community participation, among them Austria's Regional Centres for Craftsmanship (UNESCO, 2016). The relevant programmes are examined in this report as institutional examples, with their functions and outcomes attributed to the specific source.

Australia remains a State not party to the 2003 Convention. The Convention operates in this report as an international reference framework for identifying the relationships that sustain living craft capability, while Australian cultural authority is determined through Australian legal, institutional and community settings (UNESCO, n.d.-a). For First Nations practice, knowledge, authority, access, transmission and disclosure remain governed by the relevant First Nations knowledge holders and communities.

The report applies UNESCO's safeguarding logic within a broader Australian sector frame. Traditional craftsmanship is one component of the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector, alongside contemporary craft practice, repair, conservation, practitioner-led enterprise and skilled production embedded within manufacturing and other industries. Across these settings, the transferable principle is continuity of capability: craft knowledge remains living where practitioners can exercise it, where materials and productive settings remain available, and where learning relationships carry that knowledge forward.



1.3 AUSTRALIAN CRAFT AND PROVENANCE SECTOR

The Australian Craft and Provenance Sector comprises Craft Practitioners and enterprises engaged in craft, together with the workshops, ateliers, institutions, material and production systems, markets and transmission relationships that support making, modification, repair, restoration, conservation, learning and the circulation of tangible craft products. It operates as a trade, industry, workforce and living-heritage sector across ceramics, glass, textiles, leather, timber, metal, jewellery, musical instruments, paper, specialist food and beverage production and related material fields.

Craft names the practice, field and category of product. Classification as craft requires substantive application of learned material knowledge and practical skill in making, modifying, repairing or conserving tangible products. Craftsmanship is an evaluative concept: it describes the demonstrable quality with which learned and embodied knowledge is applied through skilled human judgement at one or more consequential stages of making, modifying, repairing or conserving a product. Sector participation, practitioner capability and assessed craftsmanship are recorded as related but distinct attributes.

Craft as trade refers to skilled productive practice undertaken through employment, enterprise, commission and exchange, in which material knowledge, technical capability and consequential human judgement contribute directly to economic production. In this report, the term provides a cross-sector economic and workforce frame connecting skilled practice, enterprise, training, transmission and productive capability across material fields. It allows craft to be analysed as productive work alongside its cultural, social and heritage functions.

Technology and scale are recorded as characteristics of production. Manual, digital, mechanical and machine-assisted processes can all form part of craft where practitioner knowledge and judgement materially influence consequential stages or outcomes. Regulation (EU) 2023/2411 provides a contemporary institutional example: its definition of craft and industrial products encompasses hand production, manual and digital tools, mechanical processes and standardised or serial production (European Union, 2023). Within agricultural and agrifood fields, Artisan Producer identifies qualifying small-scale production under applicable field-specific limits, with direct producer responsibility for consequential stages of production.

Recognition functions follow the same principle of separation. Japan designates regional traditional craft industries under the Act on the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries 1974 and separately recognises experienced practitioners through the Dentō Kōgeishi system, which requires substantial industry experience and assessment of practical skill and knowledge (Government of Japan, 1974; Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries, n.d.). The Association currently specifies at least 12 years of practical experience in the relevant designated craft-producing region together with practical, knowledge and interview examinations for this practitioner recognition (Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries, n.d.).

The Australian framework identifies distinct units for distinct purposes. Sector scope identifies the field; practitioner recognition identifies demonstrated capability; Artisan Producer classifies qualifying agricultural and agrifood production, while atelier recognition addresses the conditions supporting skilled practice, production and transmission; craftsmanship assessment evaluates a defined product, batch, line or controlled process; provenance records evidenced relationships; and geographical indications protect qualifying geographical names used for products complying with the applicable specification. This architecture makes skilled production visible while preserving the evidentiary integrity of each claim.

1.4 CRAFTSMANSHIP SCHOLARSHIP

Craftsmanship requires an operational definition capable of working across different materials, production systems and fields of practice. Scholarship provides a consistent foundation in three ideas: learned capability, consequential judgement and standards of excellence recognised within a practice. These elements allow craftsmanship to be assessed as a quality of skilled work through evidence of practice, process and outcome.

Sennett (2008) describes craftsmanship through the commitment to doing work well for its own sake and the disciplined development of skill directed towards the work itself. Pye's (1995) distinction between the workmanship of risk and workmanship of certainty focuses attention on the production process: in workmanship of risk, the quality of the result remains dependent on judgement, dexterity and care exercised during making; in workmanship of certainty, the result is substantially predetermined by the production system. MacIntyre's (1981) account of a practice adds the importance of internally recognised standards of excellence through which capability and achievement become intelligible within a field.

Together, these traditions locate craftsmanship in the relationship between knowledge, judgement, execution and field-specific standards. Hand-making, time, price, reputation, scale and machinery can each provide relevant contextual evidence, while the evaluative task remains focused on what capability is required, where consequential decisions occur and how well the defined work meets the standards of its practice.

Contemporary organisation studies extend this analysis beyond the independent workshop. Ravasi et al. (2025) identify phenomenological, social-constructionist and essentialist approaches to craft: craft as an artisanal mode of production, as a socially constructed characterisation of producers and products, and as a distinctive orientation to work and organising. Rennstam and Paulsson (2025) develop the related concept of craft orientation, centred on doing a job well, sustained human engagement and an epistemic relationship with the object of production. These accounts provide concepts for examining skilled human engagement and relationships with materials and objects across organisational settings. Their application to particular manufacturing systems requires evidence of the work undertaken and the judgement exercised.

Historical and cultural scholarship also demonstrates that craft categories are socially formed and that practitioners may identify through terms including artist, designer, maker, artisan, craftsperson or tradesperson (Adamson, 2013; Luckman and Andrew, 2020). Those identities carry practice and cultural meaning, while assessment requires criteria that can be applied consistently to a stated claim.

Claims about craftsmanship are also tested in law and in the market. Australian Consumer Law requires claims concerning a product's qualities, manufacturing process and origin to be accurate and capable of substantiation, while contemporary Australian research shows artisanal language and imagery operating across markedly different scales and modes of production (ACCC, n.d.-b; Phillipov, Luckman and McGaurr, 2025). A proposed craftsmanship framework would give evidentiary content to the claim by defining the field, assessment scope, consequential stages and standard attained.

1.5 MANUAL CAPABILITY AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT



Manual capability has a substantial biological, neural and developmental foundation relevant to the acquisition of craft skill. Baker, Barton and Venditti (2025) analysed hand proportions and brain size across 95 fossil and living primates and found a significant positive association between relative thumb length, a morphological correlate of dexterity, and brain size. Their analysis also identified a relationship with neocortex volume, supporting a long evolutionary association between manipulation and neural capacity.

Neurophysiological research provides a complementary account of the sensory organisation supporting manipulation. Hashimoto et al. (2013) compared finger and toe representations in the primary somatosensory cortex of humans and Japanese macaques. Individual fingers had differentiated representations in both species, while the human big toe had a distinct representation associated with bipedal locomotion. These findings concern the evolutionary organisation of sensory representations and provide background to manual capability.

Skill acquisition adds a developmental dimension. Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Römer's (1993) influential work on expert performance identified structured, effortful practice directed towards improvement as a contributor to advanced capability. Zhou and Tolmie (2024), using the United Kingdom Millennium Cohort Study, examined associations between early motor skills and later executive-function and academic outcomes. These observational findings provide developmental context, while Ericsson, Krampe and Tesch-Römer (1993) provide a separate basis for examining structured practice in the development of expertise. Neither study directly evaluates craft education as an intervention.

Australian craft research supplies the productive context for this capability. Luckman and Tower (2023) identify embodied material knowledge and hands-on making expertise as resources relevant to manufacturing, repair and innovation, particularly where digital technologies extend production while experienced practitioners continue to interpret materials and processes. Thomas (2026) proposes a hand–brain continuum and manual cortical load hypothesis concerning the cognitive demands of sustained hand-skill learning. This is a conceptual proposal for longitudinal and experimental evaluation, rather than an established finding about cognitive outcomes.

The evidence connects learning, capability and productive judgement. Manual and material competence develops through sustained engagement and remains available for further technical development, repair, adaptation and innovation. This supports education and workforce settings that provide recurring access to tools, materials, specialist instruction and practical problem-solving.

It also reinforces the report's technology-neutral definition of craftsmanship. Human capability can be exercised through hand tools, machinery, digital fabrication and automated systems. The defining question is where learned knowledge and consequential judgement materially influence production and the quality of the resulting work.

1.6 CRAFTSMANSHIP CERTIFICATION FRAMEWORK

The definitions adopted in this report require connected forms of recognition because practitioner capability, productive settings, product craftsmanship and provenance answer different evidentiary questions. Practitioners hold learned capability; workshops, ateliers and enterprises sustain practice, production and transmission; defined products and processes provide units for craftsmanship assessment; and provenance records the relationships connecting practitioner or producer, knowledge, material, method, place and product.

The proposed National Craftsmanship Certification Framework organises these functions through distinct but interoperable forms of recognition. Under the proposed framework, Certified Craft Practitioner would recognise demonstrated field-specific practical capability and knowledge. Certified Craft Atelier would recognise a workshop, enterprise or place maintaining defined conditions for skilled practice, production and transmission. Certified Master Craftsperson would recognise advanced field capability together with leadership, stewardship and demonstrated responsibility for transmission. Artisan Producer identifies qualifying small-scale agricultural, agrifood, craft food or beverage production under field-specific limits, with direct producer responsibility for consequential stages of production.

Technical craftsmanship concerns the quality of skilled human judgement and execution at consequential stages of making, modifying, repairing or conserving work. Command of materials or ingredients, tools and processes, technical execution and fitness for purpose inform the relevant product account. In the Craftsmanship Star Rating Framework, these considerations run through the five pillars: material selection informs Materials and impact, construction and finishing inform Durability, and access for maintenance and renewal informs Repair and circularity.

The Craftsmanship Star Rating Framework in Appendix B explains the purpose, principles and product scope of a voluntary product labelling system. Its fundamental purpose is to provide reliable, relevant and readily understood craftsmanship information and/or guidance on products to assist consumers to make informed purchases and more sustainable choices. Five public pillars organise that information around one overall rating out of five: Provenance; Materials and impact; Durability; Repair and circularity; and Heritage and transmission. The product is the focus of the rating, while practitioner and atelier recognition retain their separate functions (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026b).

Supporting information identifies the product and contribution concerned. For repaired or conserved work, it distinguishes the existing object from the intervention. Comparison follows equivalent functions and conditions of use, with different questions for durable goods and consumables. Provenance records the knowledge lineage associated with the work; Heritage and transmission explains the continuing practice and learning relationships sustaining it. These distinctions allow related evidence to answer different questions without treating the pillars as interchangeable.

The framework also maintains distinct market and provenance claims. A Maker's Mark links a practitioner contribution to a verified practitioner record identified through a Unique Provenance Identifier (UPI). Provenance records materials or ingredients, makers or producers, places, methods, knowledge transmission and relevant subsequent custody or use. A geographical indication protects a qualifying geographical name used for products complying with the applicable specification. Digital product records can carry verified fields from these systems while retaining the evidentiary status and permissions attached to each claim.

The Minimum Standards in Appendix A provide the overarching voluntary industry principles for governance, competent assessment, independence, review and accessible participation. Detailed CSR assessment methods and conditions for using the mark will be developed and tested in a separate Implementation Guide. Where First Nations cultural knowledge is involved, the relevant knowledge holders and communities direct cultural authority, consent, attribution, access and disclosure.

2

Sector Definition and Measurement

> “This is a diverse sector that supports jobs and generates an economic impact across all parts of the country.”

Grant Thornton, 2021
Andrew Webb, Chief Economist, Grant Thornton

2.1 SECTOR SCOPE

Traditional craftsmanship provides a starting point for defining the field because UNESCO (n.d.-b) locates safeguarding principally in the knowledge and skills through which tangible craft expressions are produced and transmitted (UNESCO, n.d.-b, 2003). For measurement purposes, this directs attention beyond finished objects to the practitioners, workplaces, materials, productive relationships and learning settings that make continuing production possible.

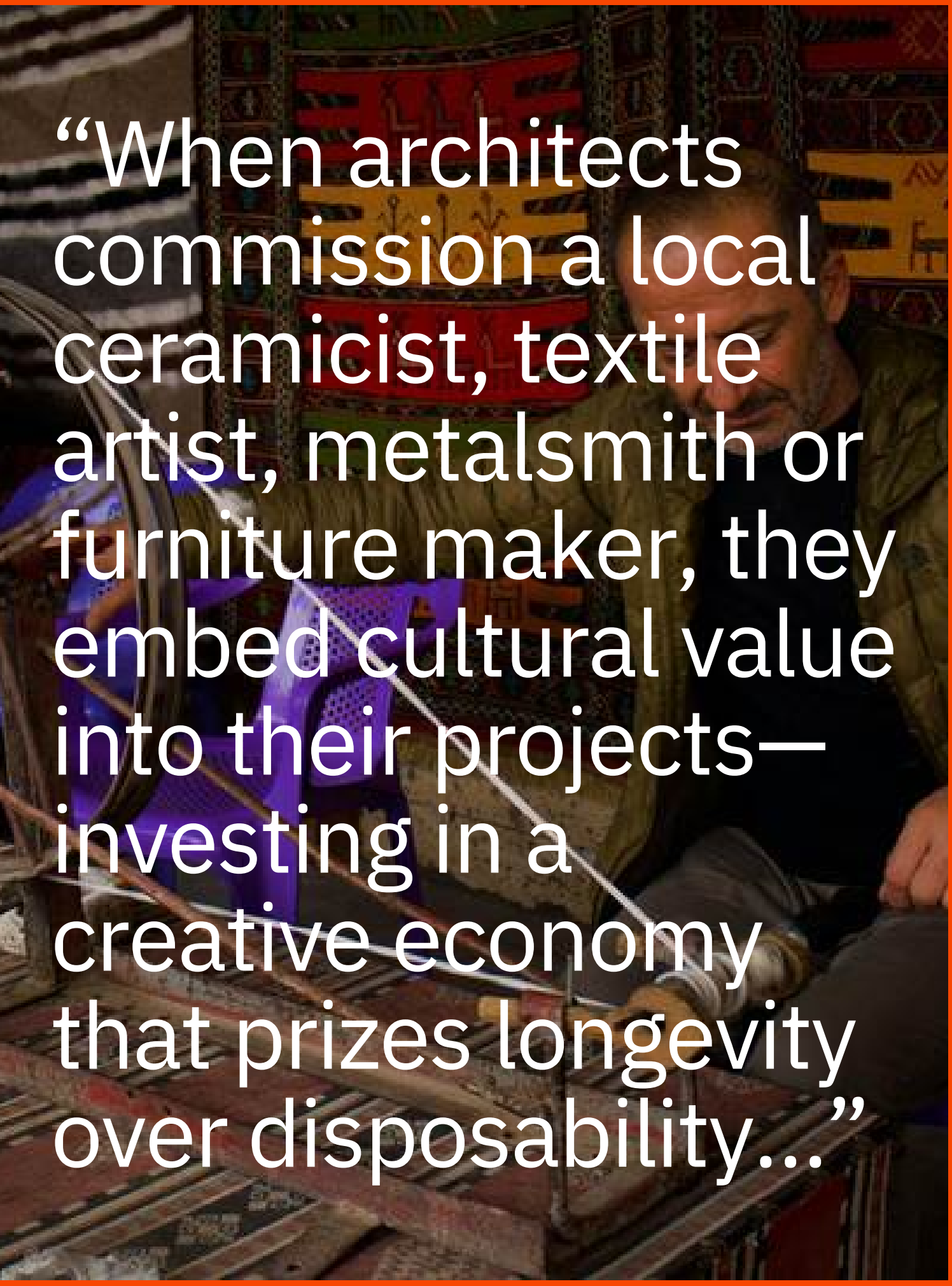
The Australian Craft and Provenance Sector is defined in this report as a trade, industry, workforce and living-heritage sector. It encompasses practitioners and enterprises together with the workshops, ateliers, institutions, production systems, markets and transmission relationships that support making, modification, repair, restoration, conservation, learning and the circulation of tangible craft products. Material fields include ceramics, glass, textiles, leather, timber, metal, jewellery, musical instruments, paper, specialist food and beverage production and related forms of skilled material practice.

The sector operates simultaneously through several dimensions. Craft as practice identifies the material field and skilled activity. Craft as trade identifies productive practice undertaken through employment, enterprise, commission and exchange, in which material knowledge, technical capability and consequential human judgement contribute directly to economic production. Industry encompasses the enterprises, facilities, supply chains and markets through which that work is organised. Workforce identifies the people through whom productive capability is exercised, while living heritage identifies the knowledge, transmission, cultural authority and place-based relationships through which capability continues over time.

These dimensions cross existing Australian administrative boundaries. Craft activity appears within visual arts, manufacturing, construction, agriculture, fashion, food, education, heritage, repair, retail and tourism. Practitioners may be classified as artists, tradespeople, production workers, designers, teachers, manufacturers, conservators, repairers or retailers according to the purpose of the system recording them. Earlier Australian mapping and later cross-occupational research demonstrate that craft-skilled work is distributed across multiple occupations and industries rather than concentrated in a single statistical category (Heath and Pascoe, 2014; Luckman and Tower, 2023).

Inclusion in the sector account should depend on an identifiable craft activity or a defined supporting function. Related industries and institutions should be recorded according to their contribution, rather than included in their entirety. Direct production, supporting infrastructure and wider supply-chain relationships should remain distinguishable in the resulting measures.

Sector scope follows relationships as well as categories. It records who holds capability, where and how production occurs, the materials and intermediate processes required, the enterprises and institutions that sustain the work, and the pathways through which knowledge is transmitted. Provenance adds an evidentiary layer by connecting practitioner or producer, material, method, place, transmission and product. For First Nations practice, cultural knowledge, authority, access and disclosure remain governed by the relevant First Nations knowledge holders and communities. This relational scope provides the basis for measuring craft as productive capability across arts, trade, industry and living heritage.



“When architects commission a local ceramicist, textile artist, metalsmith or furniture maker, they embed cultural value into their projects—investing in a creative economy that prizes longevity over disposability…”

Carmel Haugh, CEO, artisan, 2026

2.2 TEXTILE MANUFACTURING CAPACITY

Australia's textile economy demonstrates why sector measurement must follow complete production chains rather than raw-material output or final sales alone. Australian Wool Innovation's (2024) market reporting, with one month of 2023–24 export data outstanding, recorded 96.3 per cent of wool exports by weight in greasy or raw form (Australian Wool Innovation, 2024). Australian Fashion Council research also identifies substantial dependence on offshore fashion and textile manufacturing (Australian Fashion Council and R.M.Williams, 2026). Between fibre and finished product sit scouring, carbonising, carding, top-making, spinning, dyeing, knitting, weaving, finishing, patternmaking, cutting, assembly and specialist repair.

Each stage combines physical infrastructure with knowledge. Machinery requires experienced operators, maintenance capability, material supply, suitable throughput and continuing demand. Spinning depends on fibre preparation; weaving depends on yarn; finishing depends on cloth; garment production depends on patternmaking, cutting, assembly and pressing. A surviving firm can retain advanced capability at several stages while remaining dependent on offshore or geographically distant processing elsewhere in the chain. Productive capacity is a property of the connected system as well as of individual enterprises.

The industry-led National Manufacturing Strategy for Australian Fashion and Textiles 2026–2036 proposes a coordinated national approach to rebuilding targeted domestic manufacturing capability. Developed through 14 national consultations involving more than 300 stakeholders, the Strategy connects fibre processing and spinning, advanced manufacturing, workforce development, shared infrastructure, procurement and demand. Its implementation framework to 2029 includes national capability mapping, skills-recognition pilots, shared manufacturing infrastructure and procurement reform (Australian Fashion Council and R.M.Williams, 2026).

This approach has direct measurement implications. Conventional industry statistics identify establishments, employment and output, while a productive-capability account also records whether the stages required for an Australian fibre-to-finished-product chain remain connected. Textile capability should be mapped through active processes, plant and specialist equipment, workforce depth, maintenance knowledge, material flows, production volume, geographic location, suppliers, training capacity and dependencies between stages. Commercial operating capacity can also be distinguished from capability available only at research, pilot, demonstration or intermittent-production scale.

Repeated mapping would show where capability is deepening, becoming concentrated or becoming dependent on a single facility or workforce cohort. It would also make visible the productive knowledge retained inside firms whose statistical classification reveals their principal activity but not their position within the wider chain.

Textiles provide a practical demonstrator for measuring productive capability across the wider craft sector. Ceramics, glass, leather, timber, metal, food production and specialist repair similarly depend on combinations of material supply, equipment, skilled practitioners, intermediate processes and viable demand. Mapping these relationships provides a stronger basis for origin claims, procurement, workforce planning, investment and assessments of economic resilience.

“Rebuilding these capabilities was seen as critical to enabling Australia to take its home-grown fibres through to finished products onshore.”

Australian Fashion Council and R.M.Williams, 2025



Waverley Mills, Tasmania | Image: Waverley Mills

CASE STUDY 01

WAVERLEY MILLS

CASE STUDY 01
WAVERLEY MILLS

LAUNCESTON, TASMANIA

Waverley Woollen Mills was established by Scottish migrant Peter Bulman at Distillery Creek, Launceston, in 1874. Bulman entered into partnership with Scottish mill owners Daniel, Archibald and David Johnstone, imported the necessary machinery and skilled workers, and commenced production on 13 May 1874. Three months later, the company's first goods sold for more than £1,000, earning the colonial government's £1,000 bonus for the first manufacture of woollen goods made entirely in Tasmania (Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, n.d.; Tasmanian Heritage Council, 2026).

The mill was initially powered by a waterwheel and later by turbines. In 1889, Bulman installed a hydroelectric scheme to operate part of the machinery and light his residence, six years before the Duck Reach scheme began supplying electricity to Launceston in 1895 (Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, n.d.; City of Launceston, n.d.). Bulman's brother-in-law, Robert Hogarth, joined the business following the dissolution of the original partnership in 1883 and became sole proprietor after Bulman's death in 1896. By the turn of the twentieth century, the mill employed approximately 100 people and produced tweed, blankets, serge, shawls, flannel and the water-resistant "bluey" cloth worn by outdoor workers. It later became particularly associated with woollen blankets, adding electric blankets and tufted carpet to its production from 1962 (Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, n.d.).

Successive generations of the Hogarth family controlled the mill until 1981, when John and Peter Temple purchased it during a period of severe pressure on the Australian textile industry. The Temple family combined wool production with factory tours and an onsite showroom, establishing public access as part of the mill's operating model. Ownership subsequently changed several times and included periods of receivership. At its peak, during and immediately following the Second World War, Waverley employed more than 300 people; at its lowest point, its workforce fell to three. The mill nevertheless remained in production on the same Distillery Creek site. On 24 June 2026, the Tasmanian Heritage Council permanently entered the Waverley Woollen Mills complex in the Tasmanian Heritage Register as THR 11586 (Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, n.d.; Zhou, 2025; Tasmanian Heritage Council, 2026).

The scale of the industrial contraction in Australian woollen manufacturing is the context in which Waverley must be understood. At the beginning of the Second World War, Australia had approximately 90 woollen and tweed mills employing around 20,000 people (Taylor, 1988). These mills were distributed across metropolitan and regional centres and were frequently major sources of local employment, technical training and regional population growth. Almost all of that capacity has disappeared.



Waverley Mills

Waverley Mills is now the last Australian woollen mill undertaking carding, spinning, weaving and finishing at one site. It does not, however, perform every stage from raw fleece to finished cloth: its wool is scoured externally before arriving in Launceston washed and ready for processing. This distinction matters because it prevents the case from overstating the capability remaining within a single enterprise. Waverley retains an integrated concentration of woollen-manufacturing processes, but it does not by itself constitute the complete national processing chain (Australian Wool Innovation, 2024; Waverley Mills, n.d.).

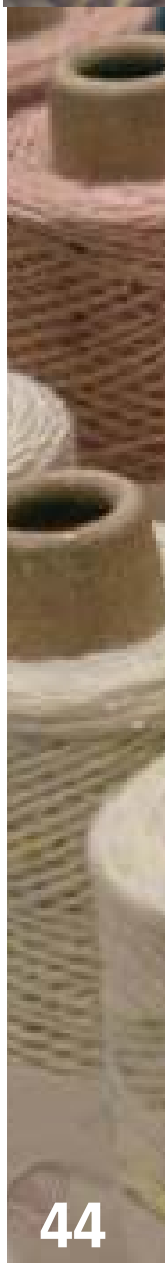
Under chief executive Fran Maiale, the mill currently employs approximately 30 people, compared with the national woollen and tweed workforce of around 20,000 at the beginning of the Second World War (Zhou, 2025). At the wider industry level, WoolProducers Australia and Deloitte Access Economics (2022) found that Australia retained sovereign capacity to undertake early-stage processing for only approximately 5 per cent of the national wool clip. The remaining clip depends overwhelmingly on offshore early-stage processing, including scouring, carbonising, carding, combing and top-making (WoolProducers Australia and Deloitte Access Economics, 2022).

Waverley's survival sits within a fragmented national chain rather than representing the continued existence of an intact Australian wool-processing industry.

The continued operation of Waverley Mills demonstrates that some of the technical knowledge required to card, spin, dye, weave and finish Australian wool on Australian soil has not disappeared. It remains embodied in a small specialist workforce, its machinery, production systems and the accumulated knowledge carried by employees, some of whom have worked at the mill for decades.

The mill has also recently expanded its capacity rather than merely preserving an unchanged historical operation. By 2024, Waverley had invested nearly $10 million in infrastructure and machinery, including more than $6 million from government grants and the remainder from private investors. Its upgraded manufacturing infrastructure combines modern textile equipment with looms that have operated for more than 60 years. At that time, the mill employed 31 people and expected to process approximately 35 tonnes of wool annually—around three times its production only a few years earlier (Australian Wool Innovation, 2024).





Waverley Mills

By 2025, Waverley was sourcing its wool exclusively from five Tasmanian farms, strengthening the traceability of its fibre supply and the relationship between regional wool production and local manufacture. The wool is scoured externally before returning to Launceston, where it is carded, spun, dyed where required, warped, woven, milled, raised, cut, sewn and labelled. The process from fleece to finished blanket takes approximately four weeks (Zhou, 2025). This does not make the supply chain completely site-contained, but it does make most of the transformation from prepared fibre to finished woollen textile visible, attributable and geographically concentrated.

Waverley's continuing combination of production, specialist skill, public access and interpretation also makes it directly relevant to the Centres for Craftsmanship model proposed in Recommendation Thirteen. Factory tours and onsite sales were incorporated into the mill's operations under the Temple family from 1981 and public tours continue today. Waverley is not itself a Centre for Craftsmanship, nor was it designed according to that model. It nevertheless provides an empirical analogue: a working manufacturing site that combines active production, the retention and transmission of specialist knowledge, public engagement, heritage interpretation and the sale of locally manufactured goods.

Waverley's capability is specific to woollen production; it does not resolve the absence of commercial worsted spinning required for fine suiting and apparel cloth, and its dependence on external scouring confirms that even this unusually integrated mill operates within a geographically fragmented chain.

Waverley Mills provides evidence of residual capability, not evidence of system-wide capacity. It demonstrates that the floor for rebuilding Australian woollen manufacturing has not fallen to zero and that targeted public and private investment can strengthen what remains.





2.3 CRAFT FOODS AND BEVERAGES

Craft food and beverage production extends the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector into agricultural and agrifood settings in which ingredients, skilled production, sensory judgement, enterprise and geographical origin intersect. Artisan Producers in this field include cheesemakers, bakers, preservers, chocolatiers, smallgoods producers, brewers, distillers and other qualifying producers working within applicable field-specific scale or volume limits. Their productive knowledge may be acquired through formal training, employment, family or community transmission, or sustained experience with particular ingredients, processes and places.

Existing statutory thresholds apply only within their respective fields and administrative purposes. Where no threshold exists, identifying Artisan Producers requires a stated provisional inclusion rule, with field-specific limits developed through evidence and consultation.

Capability is expressed through decisions that materially determine the product. These may include cultivation or ingredient selection, preparation, fermentation, maturation, blending, temperature control, texture, flavour, preservation, batch assessment, storage and release. Production may be undertaken by one person or organised through an enterprise employing staff, using specialist equipment or contracting a defined processing stage. The relevant evidence is the location of productive responsibility: which decisions remain with the Artisan Producer, which processes are undertaken within the enterprise and how consistency is maintained across successive batches.

Australian statistical systems do not identify Artisan Producers as a coherent producer population. Businesses are distributed across agriculture, food and beverage manufacturing, hospitality, wholesale and retail according to their principal activity. Commercial use of the terms artisan and craft also extends across markedly different production scales and does not provide a reliable basis for sector classification (Phillipov, Luckman and McGaurr, 2025). Measurement requires evidence of the productive relationship itself, including enterprise scale, production volume, materials or ingredients, production location, processes undertaken and producer responsibility for consequential decisions.

Queensland's artisan producer liquor licence provides a domestic precedent for applying field-specific thresholds. The licence requires the production of craft beer or artisan spirits to be the principal activity conducted on the licensed premises. It applies to production in a financial year of at least 2,500 litres and no more than 5 million litres of craft beer, or at least 400 litres and no more than 450,000 litres of artisan spirits (Queensland Government, 2023). These thresholds apply only within the Queensland liquor-licensing system. They demonstrate, however, that production scale can be defined for a particular product and administrative purpose without imposing the same measure on cheese, bread, preserves, chocolate or other products.

Geographical indications add a collective and place-based dimension. Australia currently protects wine geographical indications through the Wine Australia framework and may protect other geographical names through certification trade marks. Under the concluded Australia–European Union Free Trade Agreement, Australia has agreed to protect 396 European geographical indications comprising 231 spirit names and 165 agricultural goods. Australia is also developing a new geographical-indication system that will provide a domestic application pathway for qualifying Australian food and spirit names (DFAT, 2026b; IP Australia, 2026b). These commitments remain subject to the agreement's entry into force and domestic implementation. A producer community seeking protection will require evidence defining the product, geographical area, production requirements, relevant qualities or reputation and the producers entitled to use the name.

Craft food and beverage production should be measured through linked producer, enterprise, product and place data. Relevant fields include producer identity, enterprise scale, production volume, ingredients and their origin, production stages, production location, responsibility for consequential processes, workforce, knowledge transmission, applicable licences and participation in a collective product specification or geographical-indication process. This would identify Artisan Producers presently dispersed across statistical and regulatory systems while preserving the field-specific frameworks governing food safety, liquor production, agricultural origin and geographical-indication rights.



Pickled Chilli Crisp Giardiniera | ACIDE™ | Image: Jon Bussell, Founder and Director

“Good to see craft food treated as craft. Fermentation and preservation are as much material knowledge as clay or timber—it just happens to be edible.”

Jon Bussell, Founder and Director

2.4 EXISTING RECOGNITION INSTRUMENTS

Australia already uses several instruments to recognise, classify or verify particular aspects of skilled production. Their functions are complementary because each answers a different evidentiary question. Qualifications record assessed educational or occupational achievement; apprenticeship records identify participation and completion; business and industry classifications identify units according to their principal activities; certification trade marks provide a mechanism for certifying defined characteristics under approved rules; country-of-origin law governs defined origin representations; geographical indications protect qualifying geographical names used for products meeting the applicable requirements; and cultural and heritage systems recognise particular forms of knowledge, practice and significance.

Certification trade marks provide a clear domestic example of claim-specific verification. They can certify characteristics including quality, origin, materials and mode of manufacture. Registration requires rules defining the applicable standards, assessment method, certifier requirements, authorised use and dispute processes; those rules are subject to ACCC approval within the statutory certification-trade-mark process (IP Australia, n.d.-a). Registration of a certification trade mark establishes the legal instrument and rules. It does not itself verify every product subsequently displaying the mark. Country-of-origin rules perform a different function by establishing the conditions under which representations such as made in, produced in or grown in may be made under Australian Consumer Law (ACCC, n.d.-a).

Geographical indications provide a distinct form of collective origin protection. Australia protects wine GIs through the Wine Australia framework and can protect other GIs through certification trade marks. The concluded Australia–European Union Free Trade Agreement negotiations create a commitment to a new domestic institutional layer: Australia has agreed to protect 396 European agricultural and spirit GIs and to develop a new GI system through which Australian applicants can also obtain domestic protection (DFAT, 2026b).

The European Union provides an additional comparator through Regulation (EU) 2023/2411, which establishes a dedicated cross-sector geographical-indication right for craft and industrial products (European Union, 2023). In a publication dated 17 July 2026, the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) reported 81 applications from seven Member States and 20 confirmed registrations, with textiles, stone products and ceramics the most represented fields (EUIPO, 2026c).

The European Union's Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation provides for Digital Product Passports (DPPs) through applicable product-specific requirements. The European Commission (2026d) lists 20 July 2026 as the operational date of the central DPP Registry, which supports product identification and registration data. Product-specific information requirements and application dates are determined through the relevant legal measures. Australian provenance records may support those requirements where their content, identifiers and technical structure correspond with the adopted specifications (European Union, 2024b; European Commission, 2026d).

The measurement implication is functional separation with interoperability. Existing instruments already generate evidence about training, enterprise, standards, origin, place and product information. A national craft-sector account can connect these records according to their evidentiary purpose while preserving the legal meaning of each. This creates an administrative foundation in which practitioner capability, craftsmanship, provenance, geographical origin and regulatory product information remain separately verifiable and capable of being connected where relevant.

2.5 STATISTICAL CLASSIFICATION

Australian statistical measurement of craft draws on classifications designed for different purposes. The Occupation Standard Classification for Australia (OSCA) classifies occupations by their tasks and skill requirements, while the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) classifies businesses and other statistical units according to their principal economic activity. Both provide essential national statistics; a cross-sector craft account requires an additional relational layer connecting occupations, enterprises, material fields and productive settings.

OSCA 2024 separately identifies occupations including Potter or Ceramic Artist, while Glass Artist, Leadlighter, Mosaic Artist, Printmaker, Quilter and Textile Artist sit within Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals not elsewhere classified. Cabinetmakers, jewellers, stonemasons, shoemakers, musical-instrument makers, textile-production workers and many repair occupations are located elsewhere in the classification (ABS, 2024a). This distribution reflects the structure of the labour market: craft-skilled work occurs within professional, trade, technical and production occupations across the economy.

ANZSIC creates a parallel division at enterprise level. Jewellery, ceramics, leather, textiles, furniture, clothing and musical-instrument production are distributed across separate manufacturing classes, while teaching, repair, conservation, retail, agriculture, hospitality and tourism are classified elsewhere (ABS, 2013a). A practitioner-led enterprise may design, make, source materials, repair, teach, sell and administer a business while being represented through one principal industry. A larger manufacturer may employ several craft-skilled occupations within the same enterprise classification.

Collections reporting a person's main job create a further measurement boundary. A practitioner whose working life combines making, teaching, commission work, repair and enterprise activity is ordinarily represented statistically through a principal occupation at a given reference point. Sector-specific evidence is required to reveal portfolio practice, transmission work and productive relationships that sit alongside that main occupational code.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) maintenance cycle provides a continuing opportunity to improve occupational visibility. OSCA 2024 remains the current standard classification. The final consultation on the draft OSCA 2027 classification ran from 17 August to 18 September 2026, with the updated classification scheduled for publication in March 2027. The update process permits changes to occupations, titles, specialisations, tasks, skill levels and related descriptive elements (ABS, 2026b).

A complete sector account requires an OSCA–ANZSIC crosswalk. Relevant occupations and industries can be mapped to material field, employment form, enterprise scale, production setting and regional location, then supplemented by sector-specific evidence on training, transmission, facilities, products and provenance. This retains the analytical value of existing national classifications while enabling related productive capability to be followed across them and measured consistently over time.

2.6 NATIONAL MAPPING AND MEASUREMENT CONTINUITY

Australian craft research contains several strong datasets, but they describe different populations, units of analysis and reference years. A repeatable national account keeps each population, unit of analysis and reference year identifiable. Participation studies measure engagement in making; professional-artist studies measure artists meeting defined professional criteria; occupational analyses identify workers in selected jobs; business data classify enterprises; education systems record enrolments and qualifications; and sector surveys capture infrastructure, enterprise and transmission relationships that national administrative datasets record less directly.

Heath and Pascoe's (2014) mapping remains the principal national baseline for the contemporary craft ecology because it combined documentary research, consultation, 46 interviews and an online survey of 644 sector stakeholders. It generated evidence on income, training, infrastructure, markets and micro-enterprise, providing a broad picture of the institutions and conditions surrounding practice. Its defined research population and methods establish the basis on which those figures can be interpreted and, where equivalent questions are repeated, compared over time.

Luckman and Tower's (2023) analysis answers a different question. By identifying occupations in which craft skills are exercised across the economy, it estimated 116,538 craft-skilled workers in 2021 and $19.2 billion in gross value added. This provides a cross-occupational estimate of the economic scale of craft-skilled work. It measures selected occupations across the economy rather than constituting a complete census of the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector defined in this report.

Professional-artist studies, cultural-participation data, Census occupation data, enterprise statistics and training records similarly retain their own populations. Their figures gain analytical value when reported according to the question each dataset was designed to answer. Together they can show participation, professional practice, workforce scale, enterprise activity, training and productive infrastructure without being converted into a single synthetic total.

Measurement continuity therefore requires a published statistical protocol. Each indicator should identify its population, unit of analysis, reference year, source, inclusion rule and relationship to the sector definition. Longitudinal reporting should repeat comparable measures where possible and present methodologically different datasets as complementary indicators. Changes to classifications and inclusion rules should be recorded so that shifts in measured scale can be distinguished from changes in the underlying sector. The protocol should also identify overlaps between datasets and distinguish people, jobs, enterprises and establishments, so that linked records and multiple activities are not counted as additional sector participants.

The next national baseline can build on the strengths of earlier mapping while adding the relationships later policy requires. Practitioner and workforce data can be connected with enterprise form, productive setting, regional capability, training and transmission, infrastructure and provenance. The result is a repeatable sector account capable of showing both scale and structure: how many people and enterprises are visible, where productive capability sits, how it is organised and whether the knowledge and facilities required for continuity are being renewed.

2.7 NATIONAL MEASUREMENT ARCHITECTURE

A national measurement architecture for the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector combines established statistical classifications with sector-specific evidence capable of recording relationships beyond the classificatory purpose of those systems. Its function is to produce a repeatable national account across trade, industry, workforce and living heritage while maintaining the integrity of the underlying occupation, industry, training, business and cultural datasets.

The first layer is statistical. An OSCA–ANZSIC crosswalk identifies relevant occupational and industry categories. Linked statistical data and supplementary sector collections then describe field of practice, employment form, enterprise scale, production setting and geography. This allows a self-employed ceramic practitioner, a jeweller employed within a manufacturer, a textile technician, a specialist food producer, a conservator and a repair practitioner to remain visible within their established classifications while also contributing to a common sector account.

The second layer measures productive capability. Relevant evidence includes workshops and ateliers, specialist plant and equipment, intermediate processing, maintenance knowledge, suppliers, material flows, production volume, shared facilities and research or testing infrastructure. Mapping these elements alongside enterprises establishes whether a material field contains a functioning production ecology and identifies where capability is concentrated across particular facilities, regions or stages of production.

The third layer measures people, capability and transmission. Practitioner records can identify field-specific experience and recognised capability where available; workforce data can establish employment and demographic structure; training data can record active delivery, apprenticeships and other formal pathways; and sector evidence can identify teaching, supervised practice, workplace learning, succession and other transmission relationships. This provides indicators of the conditions supporting continuity of knowledge alongside the current presence of an occupation.

The fourth layer connects product, place and provenance. Relevant records can identify defined products or processes, materials or ingredients, production stages, responsible practitioners or enterprises, place, certification status and geographical specifications. Provenance connects these fields over time and can record transmission, custody, repair and cultural meaning where appropriate. Culturally restricted information and First Nations cultural authority require access and disclosure arrangements determined by the relevant First Nations knowledge holders and communities.

The architecture draws from ABS statistics, training and qualification data, business and regulatory records, sector surveys, recognised administrative registries and periodic capability audits. Published definitions, inclusion rules, crosswalk versions and methods should accompany each national release so that change can be followed consistently. Certification and registry data contribute evidence within their stated scope, with verification status, coverage and limitations recorded. Their participants should not be treated as representative of the whole sector without an appropriate sampling or coverage assessment. Population-level statistics and sector research provide the wider field-level account.

This architecture converts sector recognition into an operational evidence system. It enables economic scale, workforce structure, productive capacity, regional concentration, transmission risk and provenance evidence to be measured through compatible but distinct indicators, creating the national evidence base required for industry, skills, heritage, regional-development and trade policy.

3

Economic, Social and Cultural Value

> “Craft enriches our economy and our lives in many ways, from master goldsmiths, to makers who build film sets and props, the small batch production of designer makers, one-off ceramic masterpieces, or emerging makers working from their kitchen tables, from centuries-old traditions to cutting edge digital making.”

Crafts Council, 2022
Written evidence (CRF0005)

3.1 ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

Craft-skilled work contributes substantially to Australia's economy across industries that are usually measured separately. Luckman and Tower (2023) identified 116,538 people in occupations requiring craft skills in 2021, 1.1 per cent of the workforce, and estimated $19.2 billion in gross value added, about 1.0 per cent of the national total. The occupational estimate establishes a benchmark for craft-skilled work; a measure of the wider Australian Craft and Provenance Sector also needs to follow enterprises and production relationships.

> Skilled material production occurs in manufacturing firms, construction and repair trades, food enterprises, fashion businesses, cultural organisations and independent workshops. Occupational classifications identify people doing this work, while industry accounts attribute the value of their output to their employer's principal activity. A practitioner operating a micro-enterprise may divide time among making, teaching, sourcing, administration and sales. These activities are economically connected even when survey and administrative systems record them under different headings. Their classification makes the relationships between skilled work, enterprise and output difficult to follow.
>
> Ireland shows the institutional importance of maintaining a consistent account. Design & Crafts Council Ireland (2024) reported approximately 63,000 direct jobs, 21,000 enterprises and €4.2 billion in gross value added for its design and craft economy in 2022, equivalent to about 1.2 per cent of national GVA. Ireland measures a nationally specified design and craft field, while Luckman and Tower (2023) examine selected Australian craft-skill occupations. The Irish example demonstrates how a defined sector can be followed through employment, enterprise and output over time.

For Australia, the central question is how the known occupational contribution relates to enterprises, supply chains and other forms of practice. Value created through processing, repair, specialist materials, teaching and distribution may be recorded elsewhere in the economy. A transparent boundary and valuation method would connect these contributions, prevent double counting and include craft-skilled workers employed within manufacturers and other firms. The $19.2 billion estimate provides a benchmark with a defined reference year and occupational scope. It can anchor the development of a broader sector account.

A continuing national economic account should connect occupational and industry data with enterprise structure, employment form, production and regional location, publishing the coverage and limitations of each measure. This would distinguish growth in skilled employment from growth in retail sales, identify where productive value is retained and follow changes using a stable method. Craft already has a substantial documented contribution whose full relationship to the wider sector remains to be measured.



“Craft and design aren’t hobbies or luxuries—they are vital expressions of identity, economy and place.”

Carmel Haugh, CEO, artisan, 2026

3.2 FASHION, TEXTILES AND FIBRE PROCESSING

Australia's wider fashion and textiles economy contributes approximately $28 billion and supports nearly 500,000 workers across design, manufacturing, wholesale, retail and associated services (Australian Fashion Council and R.M.Williams, 2026). Textile, clothing and footwear manufacturing contributes approximately $2.6 billion in value added and employs more than 27,000 people within that wider field. The figures cover different activities: the wider industry and domestic production. Approximately 97 per cent of clothing and textile products sold in Australia are manufactured offshore (Australian Fashion Council and R.M.Williams, 2026).

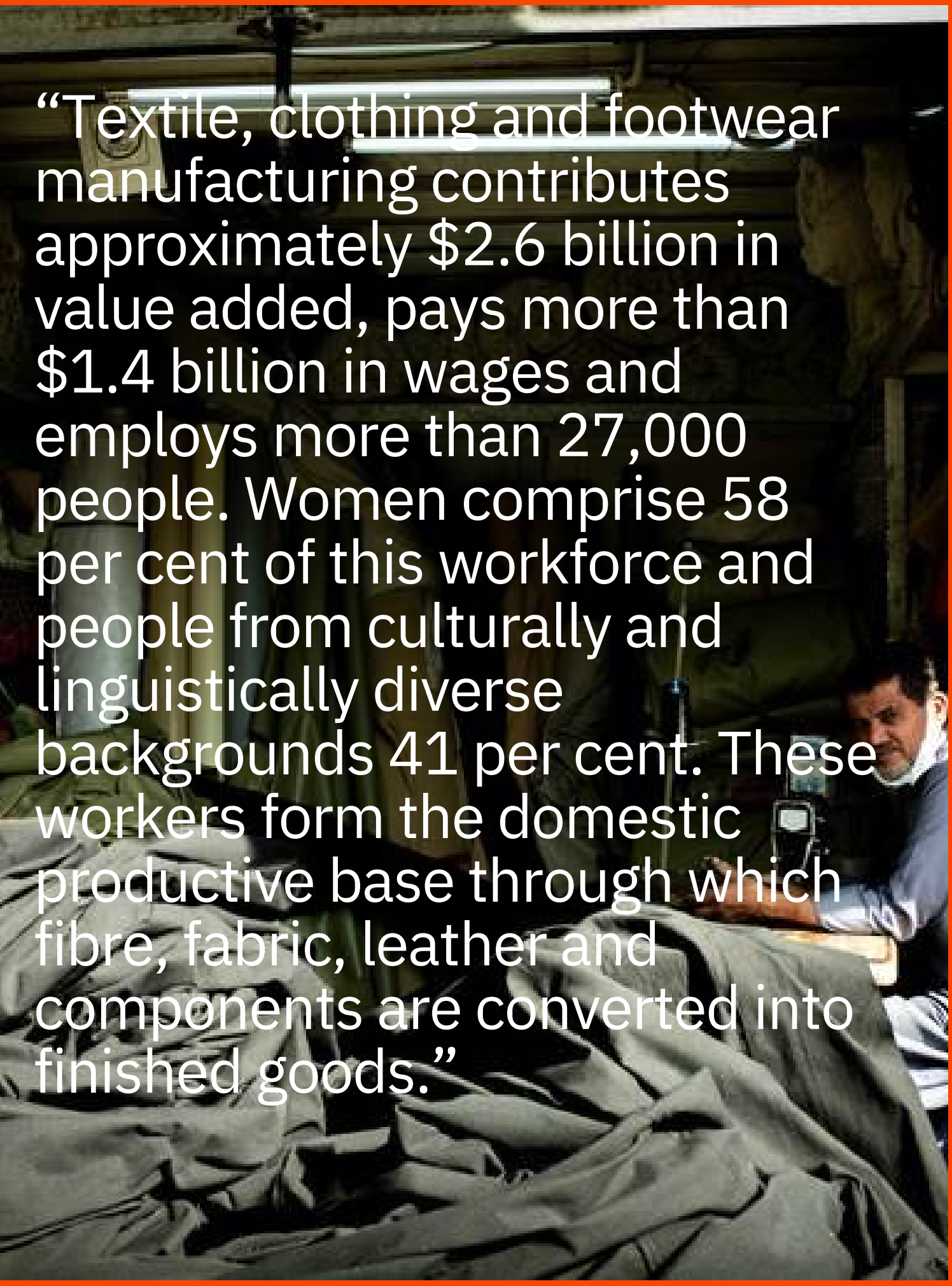


Australia produces cotton and wool, with other plant, animal and recovered fibres presenting further possibilities for domestic processing. Each material requires compatible preparation, spinning equipment and specialist labour before it can enter suitable weaving, knitting or other manufacturing processes. Capacity varies by fibre and production method. Waverley Mills retains woollen spinning and weaving at one Tasmanian site; industrial cotton spinning represents a separate national gap. These examples locate different kinds of productive knowledge within the chain and show where domestic materials, machinery and markets need to be connected.

A 2026 CSIRO feasibility study, funded through the Cotton Research and Development Corporation, examines short-staple spinning principally for cotton. It provides a template from which prospective manufacturers can develop business cases addressing technology, energy, workforce, logistics and location (CRDC, 2025; Hughes, 2026). Reporting on the study identifies potential applications for compatible recycled fibres, hemp and shorter wool. Flax preparation, long-staple wool spinning and downstream weaving and finishing require assessment suited to their own material and production requirements. The CSIRO work supplies a method for examining investment conditions and available technologies within a defined part of the textile chain.

Location influences both input costs and access to customers. Proximity to growers, suitable energy supply, textile manufacturers and freight routes creates different operating conditions for a spinning facility. Manufacturers also need evidence of continuing orders and production volumes. The Australian Fashion Council has identified uniform and defence-apparel procurement as a potential source of demand (Hughes, 2026), while the Australian Fashion Council and R.M.Williams (2026) strategy connects investment in plant with workforce development and market access. Testing these relationships together would show which combinations of fibre, facility, workforce and customer could support production.

National capability mapping should follow each fibre through active processing and manufacture, recording plant, throughput, workforce skills, geographic dependencies and demand. It should identify the capacity of operating specialist mills, research facilities, pilot operations and industrial manufacturers according to the production each can undertake. This would show where investment could connect Australian materials to domestic yarn, cloth and finished goods. The economic contribution of fashion and textiles could then be assessed alongside the specific material transformations and skilled work retained in Australia.



“Textile, clothing and footwear manufacturing contributes approximately $2.6 billion in value added, pays more than $1.4 billion in wages and employs more than 27,000 people. Women comprise 58 per cent of this workforce and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds 41 per cent. These workers form the domestic productive base through which fibre, fabric, leather and components are converted into finished goods.”

Australian Fashion Council and R.M.Williams, 2026

3.3 WOMEN'S ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Women are central to Australian fashion and textile work. They account for approximately 77 per cent of the wider fashion and textiles workforce, which includes design, retail, wholesale and related services, and 58 per cent of textile, clothing and footwear manufacturing workers (Australian Fashion Council and EY, 2021; Australian Fashion Council and R.M.Williams, 2026). The figures describe different parts of the industry and come from different reporting periods. They support separate analysis of women's participation in production, sales and other roles.



Participation and economic return need to be measured together. In a survey of visual and craft artists, McQuilten et al. (2025) reported a 47 per cent gap between women's and men's average income from artistic practice. Within that professional population, substantial female participation coexisted with unequal returns. The study provides a defined measure of practice-derived income that can inform wider investigation across employment and enterprise. Production income, wages, hours, employment security and ownership need to be examined separately to describe women's economic position across the wider sector.

The history of textile production shows that women's industrial capability has often developed within restricted opportunities. Factory and outwork systems relied on the labour of women, including successive migrant communities, while offering different levels of pay, security and occupational mobility (Webber and Weller, 2001). Women's work also extended across a much wider range of industrial materials and machinery. Women exercise technical competence in metal manufacturing and other material fields beyond the most visible female-concentrated craft occupations.

These histories show that the economic position of women is shaped both by how female-concentrated work is valued and by access to recognised trades, facilities and progression. Those are related measurement questions with different evidence requirements. The value attached to work already performed also affects whether the workers who sustain it can earn, remain and progress. Measurement of production roles, remuneration and control over enterprise would make the contribution associated with women's industry participation more precise.

National craft-workforce measurement should identify field of practice, production task, employment form, hours, earnings, enterprise ownership and progression by gender, with appropriate privacy protections and sufficiently detailed occupational categories. These measures would allow the contribution of women in workshops, factories and independent practice to be assessed alongside the conditions under which it is made. They would also clarify where higher participation reflects access to durable skilled work and where a field depends on labour that remains economically undervalued.



Port Kembla Steelworks 1970s | Image: Broken Hill Proprietary Company (BHP)

CASE STUDY 02

THE D MILL

PORT KEMBLA, NEW SOUTH WALES—BRASS TUBE MANUFACTURE, OPENED 1942

The D Mill opened at Metal Manufactures' Port Kembla works in 1942 for a highly specific wartime purpose: producing 0.195 × 0.005-inch 70/30 brass tube for the radiator cores of Australian-manufactured Beaufort bombers. Because wartime labour shortages had reduced the available male workforce, the Department of Labour and Industry permitted the company to employ women in the mill. Tube Mill Foreman Fred Walls began with a group of approximately 10 women, most of whom, according to his later account, had never worked in a factory or operated equipment such as a drawbench or swager (Metal Manufactures Limited, 1965).

The workforce expanded rapidly. At the height of wartime production, 60 women operated the D Mill across two shifts, producing approximately 250,000 feet of bomber tube each week. Women also undertook the testing and inspection of the finished tube. A 1965 company newsletter described the D Mill, with the qualification "as far as we know", as the only tube-manufacturing mill in Australia operated entirely by women. Three members of the original 1942 workforce were still employed there when that account was published 23 years later: Margaret Kidd and forewomen Jot Randle and Dorothy Jarvis (Metal Manufactures Limited, 1965).

The D Mill formed part of a much larger wartime transformation. Australia's need to manufacture aircraft, machinery and other essential equipment domestically accelerated the development of metals, engineering and specialised manufacturing. Women's participation in the national workforce increased by one-third between 1939 and 1943, while women's share of manufacturing employment reached approximately 30 per cent during the Second World War (Hobson and Thomas, 2021; ABS, 2001b). The Beaufort program itself required an imported British aircraft to be adapted as the pattern for local manufacture by the Department of Aircraft Production, supported by an Australian supply chain capable of producing its specialised components (Australian War Memorial, 2020).



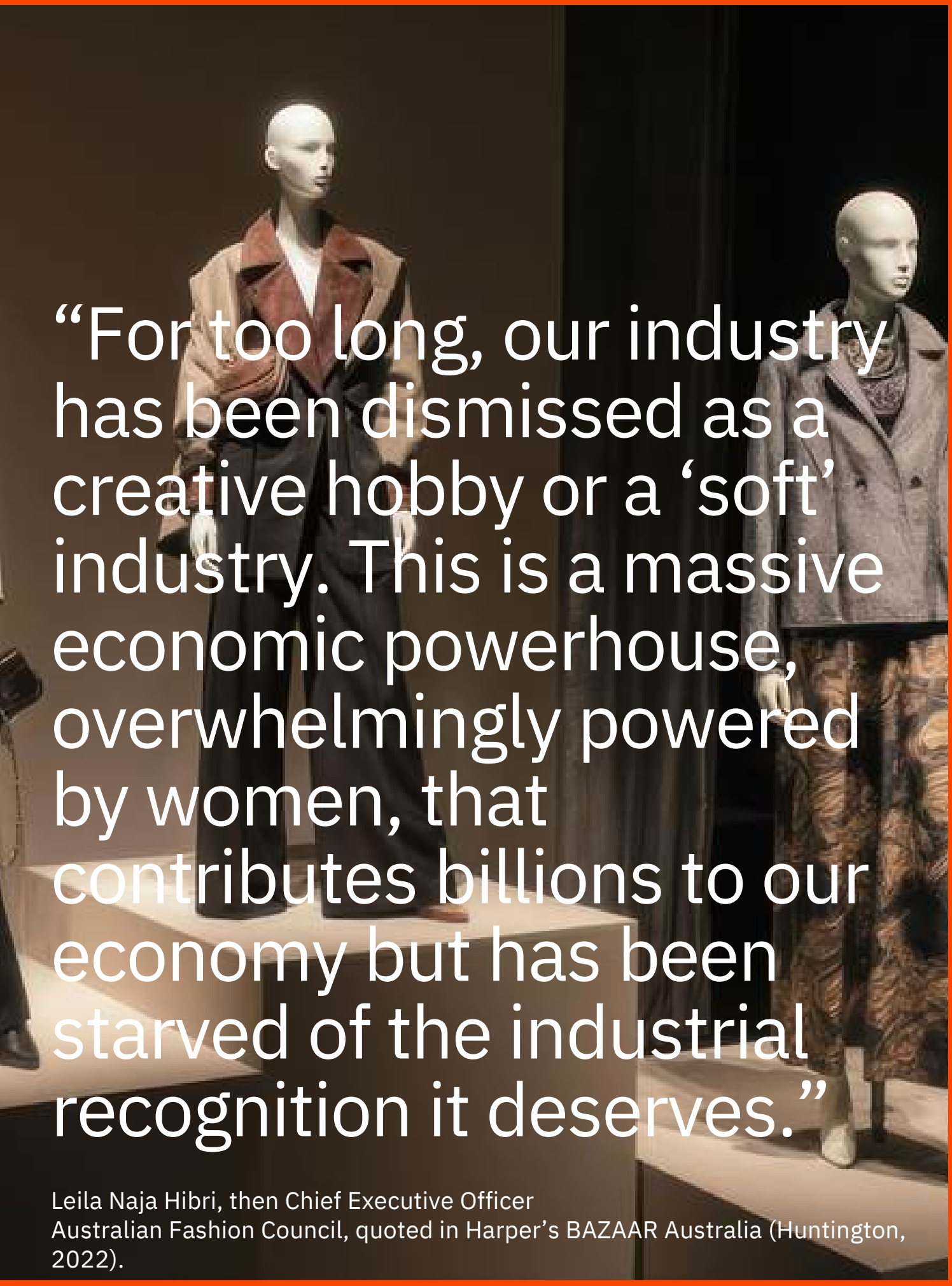
The D Mill

What distinguishes the D Mill from many accounts of women's wartime employment is what happened after the immediate defence requirement ended. Rather than closing the mill or removing its female workforce, Metal Manufactures modified the machinery for civilian production. By 1965, the women were producing straight tube under half an inch in diameter, including capillary tube for refrigeration, copper tube for air-conditioning and small commercial tubes in copper and copper alloys. The skills first acquired for wartime production were retained, adapted and applied to new markets for at least two decades after the war.

The D Mill demonstrates that women's participation in industrial craftsmanship was not confined to temporary or auxiliary work. The women operated metal-forming machinery, maintained production across two shifts, tested output against technical requirements and transferred their knowledge to new workers. When the product changed, the workforce adapted with it. The evidence supports a narrow but consequential conclusion: the initial barrier was not women's technical capability, but their access to training, machinery and authorised employment.



The D Mill Girls, MM Newsletter, Winter 1965 | Image: Supporting and Linking Tradeswomen (SALT)



“For too long, our industry has been dismissed as a creative hobby or a ‘soft’ industry. This is a massive economic powerhouse, overwhelmingly powered by women, that contributes billions to our economy but has been starved of the industrial recognition it deserves.”

Leila Naja Hibri, then Chief Executive Officer
Australian Fashion Council, quoted in Harper’s BAZAAR Australia (Huntington, 2022).

3.4 REGIONAL ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

Craft enterprises draw economic value from regional materials, specialised workshops, local knowledge and markets. This distribution includes productive work within manufacturing firms as well as independent practice. A regional craft economy can therefore contain growers, processors, makers, repairers, educators and retailers whose activities are classified in different industries. The economic contribution of a place is made through their connected work, which a regional account can trace across industries.

Regional contribution is often distributed across several localities. A workshop may employ makers in one town, source timber or fibre from another, use a specialist processor in a third and sell through metropolitan or online retailers. Counting businesses at their registered address reveals one part of this geography. Following production sites, suppliers and orders would show where practitioners and facilities operate, the markets they serve and the employment they sustain. In Australia, travel distances and access to intermediate processing make production-site data particularly informative.

> Australian regional production often joins material supply to several separate forms of paid work. Fibre growers, processors, mills, textile makers and retailers may operate in different towns while remaining economically connected through continuing orders. Ceramics, timber, food, metal and repair fields can similarly combine material sources, specialised equipment, workshop labour and distribution across a wider regional area. These connections generate employment and business activity at successive stages. A regional account can identify both the firms that make a finished product and the workshops and facilities on which their continuing production depends.

> Regional economic value depends on producers' access to suitable equipment, intermediate processing, skilled labour, buyers and distribution. The closure of a processing facility changes where material transformation and associated employment take place, even where primary materials and practitioners remain in the region. A continuing chain allows regional firms to retain work at several stages and develop associated markets. Local employment, enterprise activity and the distribution of productive value across a region provide the basis for judging this economic contribution.

Regional measurement should record where consequential production stages occur, the enterprises and workers involved, and the movement of materials and orders between them. Business location, production location and material origin can then be analysed as separate attributes. Following employment and income alongside changes in capacity would show which activities are retained within a region and how its craft economy develops over time. It would also help identify seasonal work, small contractors and specialist services whose contribution extends beyond the final maker's workshop.



3.5 HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Craft activities are used in health and community settings because making can combine purposeful action, attention, material feedback and opportunities to develop competence. The evidence is most precise when the participants, setting and outcome are identified. Bukhave et al. (2025) reviewed 19 studies of craft-based interventions involving activities including pottery, textiles and woodwork. Every included study reported short-term improvement in at least one measured outcome, among them mood, anxiety and wellbeing. Differences in research design and quality call for further evaluation of effectiveness across settings and the duration of benefits.

The World Health Organization's wider review of arts and health research identified potential contributions across health promotion, prevention and the management of illness (Fancourt and Finn, 2019). It provides a wider context for craft-specific evaluation. Kokko, Väänänen and Hirvonen's (2026) study for the European Crafts Alliance adds evidence from literature, interviews and a cross-European survey of people engaged in craft (Kokko, Väänänen and Hirvonen, 2026). Reported experiences of concentration, social connection and wellbeing help identify possible mechanisms. A further stage of research would test these outcomes through defined programs, comparison groups and follow-up over time.

Delivering a sustained health or community program may depend on professional makers to select materials, teach safely, adapt a task to different abilities and maintain a welcoming environment. Those contributions require preparation, materials, workspace and paid practitioner time. The European study also records economic strain and tensions between work and personal life among professional makers (Kokko, Väänänen and Hirvonen, 2026). Program evaluation should include the remuneration and working conditions that allow practitioners to deliver continuing activity.

Australian datasets separate these elements. Health evaluation may record a participant's symptoms or functional outcomes, cultural surveys record participation, and industry data locate the practitioner's principal work elsewhere. An integrated evaluation would record the form of craft undertaken, the skill and supervision provided, the costs of delivery and whether reported changes persist. The measurement question here concerns defined health outcomes and the conditions under which craft-based activity is offered, including continuity of provision and practitioner support.

Australian evaluation of craft in health, recovery and preventative settings should compare clearly described programs, participant groups, duration, outcomes and costs, while recording who delivers the activity and how they are remunerated. This would show where craft offers a useful contribution, which effects can be sustained and what further evidence is required before a model is expanded. Measured outcomes and defined delivery responsibilities can then inform appropriate recognition within health policy.

3.6 AUTOMATION AND HUMAN SKILL

Craft production has long involved tools and machinery. The relevant economic question is where knowledgeable human judgement remains consequential to the quality, suitability and accountability of a finished result. A practitioner may exercise that judgement through hand tools, mechanical equipment or computer-controlled processes: selecting materials, interpreting a brief, adjusting a process, identifying faults and deciding when work is complete. Craftsmanship concerns the quality with which learned capability and judgement are exercised across these production settings.

Automation changes which tasks are performed by people and which are assigned to machines. It can reduce exposure to dangerous or repetitive work and increase consistency or output, while new equipment still requires setup, monitoring, maintenance and decisions about exceptional cases. Task-based analysis provides a way to examine these changes in the content of work alongside employment and output measures (Autor, 2015). For craft-skilled occupations, assessment should follow how workers acquire material and production judgement as their tasks change.

Digital design and generative artificial intelligence extend this question to the representation of products. Images, design variants and sales descriptions can be generated or copied at speed, making appearance a weaker indication of who designed, made or photographed a product. Australia's Copyright and Artificial Intelligence Reference Group has considered transparency in relation to the use of copyright material by AI systems (Attorney-General's Department, 2024). Product-level evidence can separately identify the materials, labour and production history behind an item offered for sale.

Economic measurement generally counts the output, the employing business and sometimes the equipment investment. Following skilled decisions within a production sequence would identify the workers responsible for them and the effects of process change on teaching and future capability. Recording roles and progression alongside output would show how changes in production affect opportunities for less experienced workers to acquire advanced skills. In product markets, visual similarity can also conceal differences in maker, materials and production, with consequences for a small business.

Assessment of new technology should therefore record the production stages undertaken by people and machines, the skills required to operate and maintain equipment, the opportunities for progression and the evidence supporting claims about human making. Product-level provenance can preserve the link between work and its practitioners where presentation alone is ambiguous. Technological change thus alters how the economic contribution of human skill must be identified and measured. Evidence drawn from workers' actual tasks, learning opportunities and production decisions can show where expertise is concentrated and how it is being carried into new methods.



3.7 PRODUCT COPYING AND PROVENANCE



Small craft and design enterprises depend on customers being able to recognise the work they have made. Digital marketplaces allow an image or product design to circulate rapidly across sellers, including sellers operating outside Australia. When an imitation is presented using the original maker's photographs or distinctive appearance, the customer can have difficulty identifying the business responsible for the work. Copying can divert sales, weaken the value attached to skilled production and require a practitioner to spend working time investigating listings. The scale of this effect across craft enterprises remains a question for sector-wide research.

> Australian law provides several ways to protect different aspects of a product. Copyright protects eligible original expression automatically, including photographs and some artistic works; registered designs address a product's visual appearance; trade marks identify a business's goods or services; and consumer law addresses specified misleading claims. A registered design must be examined and certified before its owner can enforce that design right. These routes require makers to identify the particular material being copied and keep evidence appropriate to the right involved (Attorney-General's Department, n.d.; IP Australia, n.d.-b).
>
> Enforcement imposes a practical cost on enterprises that release small runs and new designs regularly. The practitioner may need to preserve dated design records, monitor marketplaces, identify an account selling a suspected copy, submit a platform complaint and seek specialist advice. Platform listings can reappear under another account or on another service, adding to the time spent away from production. IP Australia supplies guidance on rights and registration; the rights holder is responsible for deciding whether and how to pursue an infringement (IP Australia, n.d.-b). Access to usable records and affordable advice affects the economic value a small producer can retain from original work.

Product provenance offers a shared record of information that customers and intermediaries can check. It can connect an item or product line to its maker, the date and place of production, materials, relevant stages of work and an authorised seller. Records created during ordinary production can support attribution and assist a rights holder in explaining the origin of a design or photograph when a dispute arises. Making these records usable across retail channels would help distinguish independently documented production from listings that rely solely on an image or a claim of origin. Such records need consistent fields, accessible verification and clear responsibility for maintaining accurate information.

The sector's exposure to copying should be measured through reported incidents, time and expense spent seeking remedies, platform responses and documented effects on sales and business decisions. These measures would guide practical support and improve recognition in the market. Together with accessible rights guidance and effective platform procedures, documented provenance gives small producers a stronger basis for securing the value of their work.

CASE STUDY 03

AUSTRALIAN DESIGNERS AND PLATFORM-SCALE IMITATION

Australian design: when the copy appears equivalent

This case examines the experiences of two Australian fashion designers who reported finding versions of their designs and original photographs used to sell garments through Shein and other online businesses. Jo Smith, founder of the Central Coast slow-fashion label Y Not Sissy, provides evidence of direct commercial harm. Kristian Williams demonstrates the related risk that an imitation may be mistaken for the work of the original designer.

The case is based on an investigation published by ABC News in June 2026. The accounts have not been independently reviewed by the practitioners for this report. Claims concerning copying, commercial harm and communications with platforms or government agencies are attributed to the people who made them. The case does not determine whether any product legally infringed copyright, a registered design or another intellectual-property right. It examines the narrower problem created when the appearance and digital representation of a small producer's work can be reproduced at platform scale more quickly than the producer can identify and contest it.

Smith operates Y Not Sissy as a sole trader producing slow-fashion garments in small batches. In 2026, a customer alerted her to products offered through Shein that appeared to reproduce two of her dresses. Smith reported that the listings also used her original photographs, including images in which she modelled the garments herself (Walker, 2026).

Smith contacted seven government bodies and ministers, including the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and the federal Small Business Minister, while seeking assistance. She reported being repeatedly referred between offices and spending three days trying to have the listings removed. During that period, one of the products sold out on Shein. Smith subsequently decided not to restock her own version despite retaining sufficient fabric, while sales of the second design also declined (Walker, 2026).

The commercial consequence was not confined to a hypothetical loss of licensing income. According to Smith's account, the lower-priced version altered her production decision and reduced the value of material she had already purchased. The use of her photographs also appropriated part of the evidence through which she communicated the garment's quality, fit, authorship and relationship to her business.

Williams reported a comparable problem involving his hand-drawn kaftan designs. He said that online "ghost stores", retailers presenting themselves in ways that could be mistaken for local businesses, used his imagery to advertise imitations. His concern was not only that the appearance of his work had been reproduced, but that consumers receiving a lower-quality product might believe it had been produced by his business. Williams reported complaints to Meta and the ACCC and described encountering repeated institutional obstacles (Walker, 2026).

When Australian designers have their work copied, it is “not just imitation”:

“It can hurt livelihoods, jobs and local businesses. We know enforcement can be hard, especially for small businesses without deep pockets.”

Anne Aly MP,
Minister for Small Business,
quoted in Walker (2026)

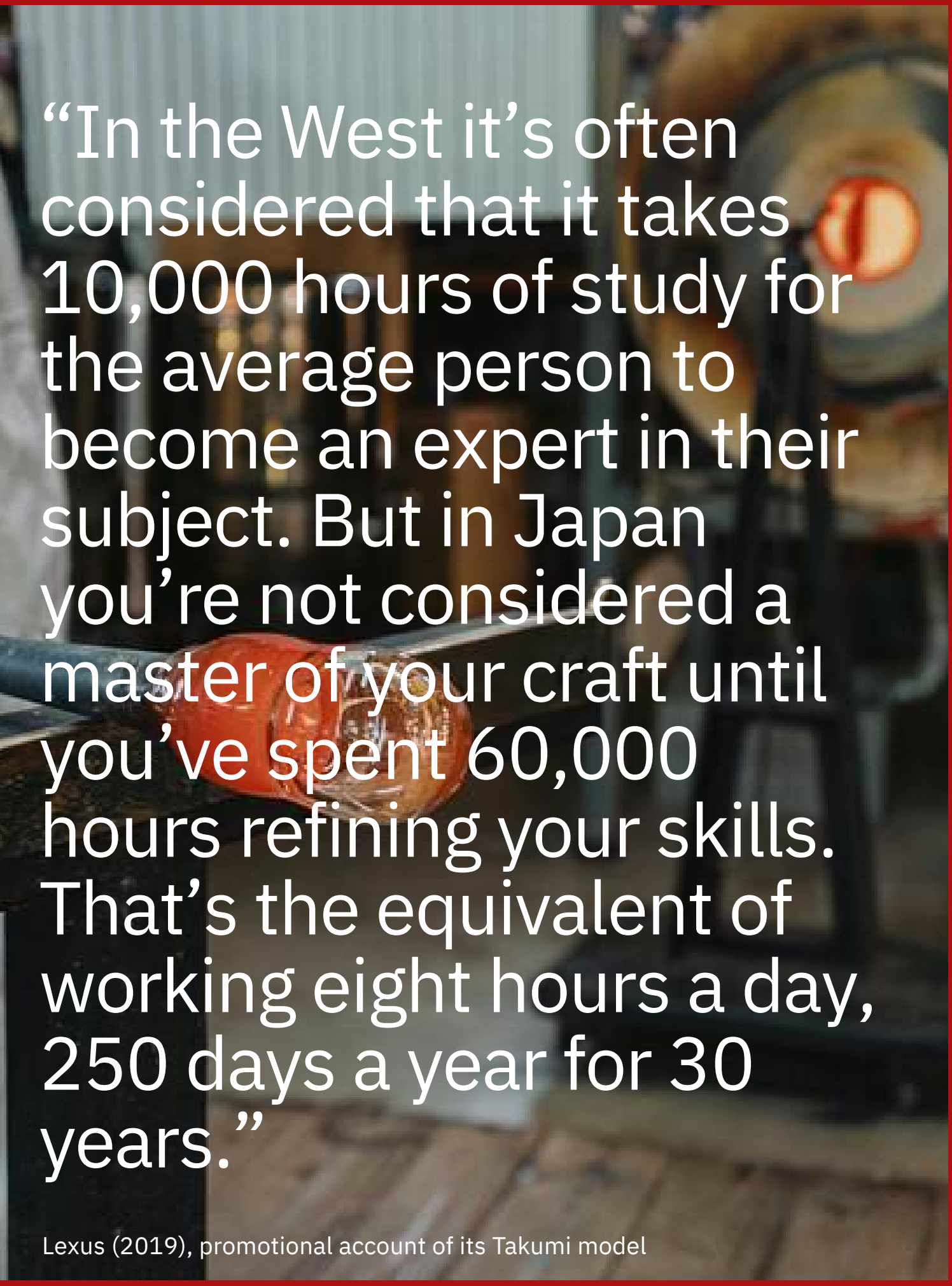
Williams’s experience demonstrates that copying can cause harm even where a purchaser of an imitation would not otherwise have bought the original. When the original designer’s imagery or brand associations are used to sell a different product, its materials, manufacture and quality may be wrongly attributed to that designer. The resulting harm can extend beyond lost sales to reputational confusion and the erosion of consumer trust.

When the ABC supplied Shein with links to the products identified by Smith and Williams, the items were removed. Shein stated that it removes products as a precaution while investigating legitimate complaints from intellectual-property rights holders and takes further action where a violation is confirmed (Walker, 2026). The removals show that platform complaints can produce a response, but they do not remove the burden placed on practitioners to discover listings, assemble evidence, locate the correct reporting channel and repeat the process when further products appear.

The case illustrates why the existence of intellectual-property law does not necessarily provide small practitioners with usable enforcement infrastructure. Copyright, registered designs, trade marks and consumer law protect different aspects of a product and are administered through different legal and institutional processes. A micro-enterprise must still identify the applicable right, preserve evidence, locate the seller or platform, submit a complaint and, where necessary, obtain legal advice or commence proceedings.

Smith’s experience also exposes an assistance gap. Government agencies may provide information or referrals without possessing the authority to remove a listing or represent an individual business. The present system consequently expects individual practitioners to coordinate monitoring, evidence preservation, legal classification, platform notification and enforcement while continuing to operate their businesses.

The case also establishes a provenance problem distinct from, although related to, intellectual property. An original and an imitation may appear equivalent when presented through the same photograph, yet they do not share the same maker, materials, production history, labour or quality control. Intellectual-property rights remain necessary, but legal ownership alone does not create a persistent and accessible record linking a product to its practitioner, place and method of production. Provenance infrastructure cannot prevent every act of copying. Its more specific function is to make the differences that copying attempts to conceal identifiable, verifiable and visible to consumers.



“In the West it’s often considered that it takes 10,000 hours of study for the average person to become an expert in their subject. But in Japan you’re not considered a master of your craft until you’ve spent 60,000 hours refining your skills. That’s the equivalent of working eight hours a day, 250 days a year for 30 years.”

Lexus (2019), promotional account of its Takumi model

3.8 SKILL TRANSMISSION

Craft knowledge develops through repeated work with materials and experienced people. Learners acquire control of tools and processes by observing a practitioner, trying a task, receiving correction and recognising how a material responds. The sequence extends from basic technique to decisions about suitability, timing, quality and repair. UNESCO (n.d.-b) identifies the transmission of knowledge and skill as central to sustaining traditional craftsmanship. Research on stone carving in Muntilan, Indonesia, describes learning through observation, imitation, guided repetition and continuing participation in a community of practice (Purnama and Artika, 2026).

Teaching forms part of production in workshops, factories and community enterprises. Experienced workers prepare tasks, supervise safety, demonstrate methods and explain judgements made during real commissions. Materials and working time are devoted to learning, while the learner gradually contributes to the work of the enterprise. Small businesses carry these responsibilities alongside orders, maintenance and sales. The economic conditions of a field therefore shape how much time a skilled practitioner can devote to another person's development and how long a learner can remain in the workplace.

> Several international arrangements give experienced makers an identifiable role in continuity. Japan's cultural-property system recognises selected people and groups who hold important techniques. Germany's Meister structure gives advanced practitioners formal standing in vocational practice and the training of apprentices. Italian national and regional arrangements provide forms of recognition for artisan and master-artisan work (Klamer, 2012; Laczik et al., 2024). Together, these arrangements make responsibility for developing future practitioners visible within systems of work and recognition.
>
> In Australia, knowledge passes through employment, apprenticeships, family businesses, independent studios, community organisations and relationships with specialist suppliers. First Nations practices follow the authority of the relevant peoples and communities, including responsibilities connected to Country, kinship and cultural protocols. Decisions about teaching, documentation and access belong within those systems of authority. Across these settings, the availability of suitable work, equipment, space, materials and experienced supervisors determines whether learners can progress to independent judgement. Continuing opportunities to practise and teach determine how these fields renew their skilled workforce.



A sector account should measure the capacity to teach as well as the number of people who already practise. Useful indicators include the number and location of experienced practitioners taking learners, paid supervision time, duration of placements, access to equipment and the progression of learners into continuing work. Recording these conditions would show where a skilled field is renewing itself, where teaching is concentrated in a few individuals and where support could sustain the workplace relationships through which knowledge is carried forward.

3.9 MIGRATION AND PRODUCTIVE KNOWLEDGE



Migration has been a continuing source of skill, enterprise and material knowledge within Australian craft and manufacturing. People arriving with experience of textile, clothing, footwear, furniture, food and metal production entered local workplaces and established businesses, bringing methods learned through employment, family practice and community teaching. These methods developed further through Australian materials, equipment, customers and working relationships. The resulting contribution is economic and cultural: production draws on accumulated knowledge while new enterprises and forms of practice become part of Australian industry.

> Textile and clothing manufacturing provides a documented account of this contribution. Migrant women undertook factory and outwork production during the second half of the twentieth century, including machining, finishing and other forms of skilled labour. Their employment was shaped by gender, ethnicity, age and migration status, with substantial differences in income, security and occupational mobility across factory work and outwork (Webber and Weller, 2001). These histories locate migrant skill within the organisation of production and the conditions under which that skill could be exercised and remunerated.
>
> Knowledge continues to move through people and enterprises. A practitioner may apply methods acquired in an overseas workshop, adapt a process to Australian materials, train co-workers or establish a business that employs other makers. Family enterprises can provide continuity across generations, while collaboration with suppliers and neighbouring workshops develops new products and markets. The value of these relationships appears in output, employment and the retention of specialist capability. It also appears in the working knowledge available to the next person entering a field.

The recognition of prior skill affects how readily that knowledge can enter paid work and enterprise. Competence may have been acquired through family production, informal apprenticeship or employment in another country. Jobs and Skills Australia (2026a) has called for stronger recognition of skills and prior learning across education and employment. In craft fields, assessment needs to identify the actual processes a person can undertake, the standards of judgement demonstrated through work and any additional safety or regulatory requirements attached to Australian practice. Employment and education records should then connect recognised capability to the opportunities available to use and develop it.

National measurement should follow the relationship among prior experience, current field of practice, employment form, enterprise activity and transmission of knowledge. Voluntary, appropriately governed collection of this information would show how migrant practitioners contribute across established firms, small workshops and independent businesses, and where experienced workers encounter barriers to continuing practice. Migration helps explain how Australia's material production has been built, renewed and sustained through successive generations of practitioners.



Carla Zampatti | Image: Carla Zampatti

CASE STUDY 04

CARLA ZAMPATTI

Carla Zampatti

Sydney, New South Wales—fashion design and Australian manufacturing, established 1965

“The rag trade always had a lot of migrants—it was a real entry point for migrants into the workforce. It was, for migrants, a way in, for Greeks, Italians, Jews, Vietnamese, Chinese.”

Allegra Spender MP, quoted in Kapetopoulos (2026)



Carla Zampatti was born in Lovero, in the Valtellina region of northern Italy, and arrived in Western Australia with her family in 1950. She left school at 14 and worked first in retail and then for a Perth clothing manufacturer, where she gained practical knowledge of fashion production, business operations and the importance of cut and fit. In 1963 she moved to Sydney with her sewing machine and began working in the fashion industry. She produced her first small collection under her own name in 1965, launched nationally two years later and opened her first boutique in Surry Hills in 1972 (Traill-Nash, 2021; New South Wales Government, 2021; Carla Zampatti, n.d.).

> Zampatti’s craftsmanship extended beyond the finished garments to the relationship she maintained between design and construction. Powerhouse (2022) research records that she worked as her own fit model, draping and testing garments on her body to understand how they fitted and moved. This hands-on approach continued throughout her career. Her design practice depended upon material knowledge—fabric behaviour, proportion, cutting, fitting and construction—rather than treating design as an activity detached from making (Powerhouse, 2022).

Over more than five decades, that practice became one of Australia’s longest-running fashion houses. Zampatti received the inaugural Australian Businesswoman of the Year award in 1980, was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 1987 for her work as a designer and manufacturer, and was elevated to Companion of the Order of Australia in 2009. She received the Australian Fashion Laureate in 2008 and was accorded a New South Wales state funeral following her death in 2021 (New South Wales Government, 2021).

The business has retained a relationship with Australian manufacturing while much Australian clothing production has moved offshore. The company states that it supports local manufacturers in Australia, and it has previously worked with Ethical Clothing Australia. SBS News reported in 2023 that the label remained one of relatively few family-owned Australian fashion businesses still manufacturing locally and documented its chief patternmaker and staff sewing garments at its Sydney head office. Taken together, these sources identify an Australian production system involving design, patternmaking, sewing and relationships with local manufacturers rather than a single-site manufacturing model such as Waverley Mills (Carla Zampatti, n.d.; Fulloon, 2023).

CARLA ZAMPATTI

The legacy is now being carried into another generation through In Her Name, a national program delivered by the Australian Multicultural Foundation in partnership with the Carla Zampatti Foundation. The program developed from the Australian Multicultural Foundation Carla Zampatti Scholarship for Young Women, established in 2022. During its first two years, the scholarship attracted more than 150 applications and supported nine women. In 2026, In Her Name provides five $10,000 scholarships for young women from migrant and multicultural backgrounds across fashion entrepreneurship, the creative industries, business, and health and allied health. Each scholarship combines financial support with mentorship, professional networks and national visibility (In Her Name, 2026).

The Fashion Entrepreneurship Prize gives one young woman $10,000 to establish or grow a fashion enterprise, together with practical runway experience at the Kaleidoscope World of Fashion Festival in Perth and mentorship through BN Collective. This combination recognises that entry into fashion requires more than talent alone. Emerging designers also need capital, commercial knowledge, industry relationships, opportunities to present their work and the confidence that comes from being recognised and supported. The program turns Carla Zampatti's legacy into a practical pathway through which another generation of women can build enterprises of their own (In Her Name, 2026).

> Carla Zampatti's career shows how migrant cultural inheritance, Australian workplace learning, material knowledge, entrepreneurship and domestic production relationships can combine over time to create a nationally significant fashion house. Her story shows that craftsmanship travels through people, grows through working relationships and becomes part of Australia's productive capacity.
>
> Carla Zampatti's achievement demonstrates what can follow when entry becomes opportunity: design knowledge becomes an enterprise, skilled work becomes an Australian institution, and one woman's success creates pathways for others. Her legacy is not confined to a fashion house or an archive of garments. It continues through her family, the people who make the clothes, the knowledge transmitted within the industry and the young women now being supported to build their own creative and commercial futures.



“Carla Zampatti built an extraordinary Australian business as a young migrant woman with ambition and determination. In Her Name carries that spirit forward, supporting the next generation of women from migrant and multicultural backgrounds to pursue their ideas, build businesses and become leaders in their own right.”

Carla Zampatti Foundation, 2026
Statement provided directly to the Australian Crafts Alliance for Mapping Australia’s Crafts Sector 2026.



Adnan Harb, working in the workshop | Image: Adnan Harb, Naturally Timber

CASE STUDY 05

NATURALLY TIMBER

Naturally Timber
Auburn, New South Wales—cabinetmaking and solid-timber furniture, established 1985

Naturally Timber founder Adnan Harb began learning cabinetmaking in the Lebanese village of Halousiye. According to the company's account, Adnan was making small furniture at seven and joined his uncle's three-person workshop at nine. What began with sweeping floors became a traditional apprenticeship in furniture construction and joinery. In 1977, Adnan and his brother left Lebanon for Sydney. Adnan was 22, spoke little English and arrived with approximately $100, but he also carried an already-developed competence in cabinetmaking (Naturally Timber, n.d.).

After several production jobs, Adnan secured his first Australian cabinetmaking position in 1979 while studying English at night. He later joined Sydney furniture maker Marius De Franci Furniture. When that business closed in 1984, Adnan purchased its machinery and assumed the workshop lease. Together with his wife, Helen Harb, he developed the enterprise that became Naturally Timber in 1985 (Naturally Timber, n.d.).

The company's published history identifies mortise-and-tenon and dovetail joints, hand-fitting, assembly, sanding and finishing among the techniques retained within the business. These processes combine machinery with the judgement required to read individual pieces of timber, determine how they should be cut, fit joints and control the finish. Naturally Timber (n.d.) states that knowledge originating in Adnan's Lebanese apprenticeship has subsequently been passed to younger craftspeople working in its Australian workshop.

Naturally Timber, the trading name of Natchil Furniture Pty Ltd (Australian Business Register, 2026), now operates a combined workshop, design studio and showroom in Auburn. Its team includes designers, cabinetmakers, furniture craftspeople and interior specialists, some of whom have worked together for decades. Solid-timber furniture is manufactured in Sydney through a combination of custom design, specialist machinery and manual construction. Clients can select dimensions, timber, finishes and fittings before an individual piece is made. This places Naturally Timber between the sole-practitioner studio and mass production: it retains a workshop, machinery, skilled workers and direct control over custom manufacture (Naturally Timber, n.d.).

The business uses Australian species including Tasmanian blackwood, Western Australian jarrah and marri, Victorian ash, river red gum, blackbutt and Sydney blue gum, alongside imported timbers selected for particular commissions. This demonstrates an important provenance distinction. The place in which furniture is made and the geographic origin of its timber are separate facts: maker provenance identifies who made the object and where, while material provenance records the species, source, certification and chain of custody of the timber.

> Naturally Timber is a case of craft knowledge entering Australia through migration and becoming the foundation of an enduring manufacturing enterprise. Adnan's competence was recognised through employment, commissions and practice rather than through a documented Australian recognition-of-prior-learning pathway. The Certified Craft Practitioner pathway proposed by this report would provide a formal means of recognising knowledge acquired through traditional apprenticeships, migration and long practice.
>
> The case demonstrates what becomes possible when migrant skill is recognised and given the workshop, machinery, workforce and commercial structure required to endure. Knowledge acquired in a small Lebanese workshop became part of an Australian family business, supported local manufacturing and was passed to another generation of craftspeople. Naturally Timber produces furniture and has enabled Australia to retain the productive knowledge behind it.





Adnan and daughter Emelia | Image: Adnan Harb, Naturally Timber

“Craftsmanship is knowledge passed from one pair of hands to another. Supporting Australian makers and local manufacturing ensures those skills are not lost, and that future generations still have the opportunity to learn them.”

—Adnan Harb

4

Sector Profile

“We have found makers engaging in a far greater range of places, and with more different types of people, than has previously been realised or recorded.”

Schwarz and Yair, 2010
Making Value, for the UK Crafts Council

4.1 PARTICIPATION

Craft participation is substantially larger than the population recorded in craft occupations. The expanded 2025 General Social Survey found that 31.3 per cent of Australians aged 15 years and over had participated in craft activities during the preceding 12 months, compared with 18.8 per cent in visual art activities and 48 per cent in at least one selected cultural activity (ABS, 2026a). Participation sustains material knowledge within households and communities and provides an entry point into paid practice, but it does not indicate occupational status or proficiency.

Across all selected cultural activities, 10 per cent of participants received some income in 2021–22 (ABS, 2023). The most detailed published comparison within visual arts and craft remains the 2007–08 evidence reproduced in the 2014 national mapping. Some paid participation was recorded for approximately 15 per cent of people involved in printmaking and screen printing, 14 per cent in photography and film-making, and 8 per cent in sculpting, painting and drawing and in glass, pottery, ceramics and mosaics. Textile, jewellery, paper and wood crafts recorded approximately 3 to 4 per cent (Heath and Pascoe, 2014, p. 15).

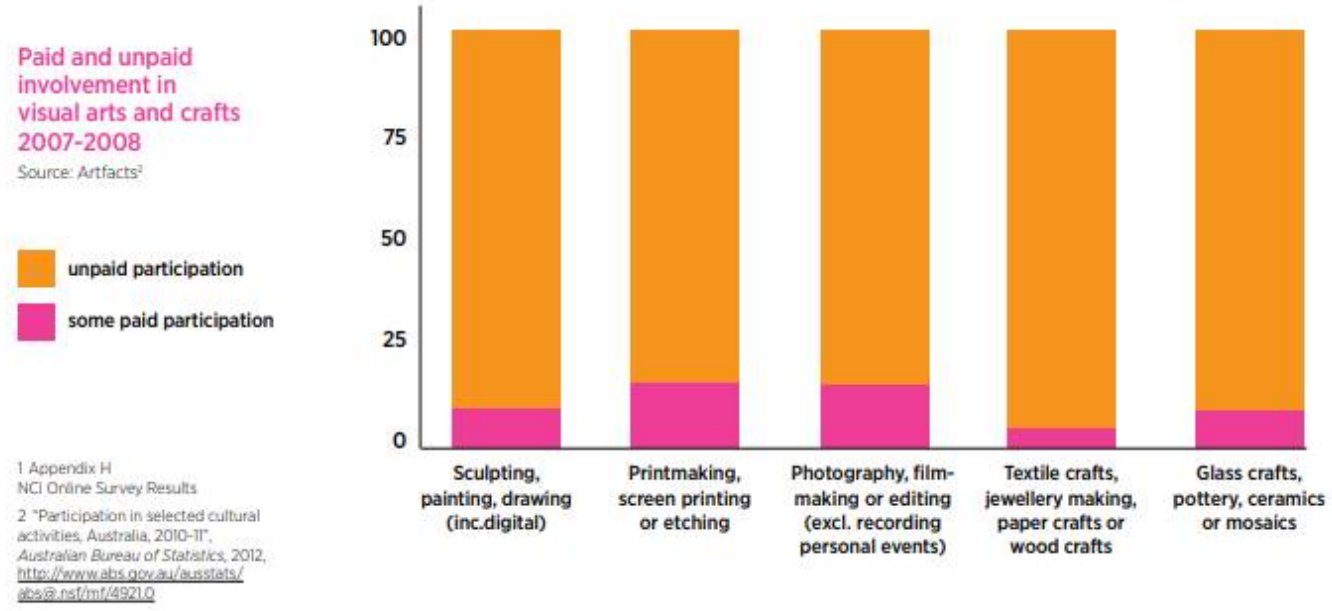


Figure 4.1. Paid and unpaid involvement in visual arts and crafts, 2007–08. Source: Artfacts, in Heath and Pascoe (2014, p. 15), reproduced with permission from the National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA).

The historical comparison shows that the proportion of participants receiving income varies substantially by field. These collections do not track individual progression into paid practice or distinguish occasional earnings from an enduring practice. Occupational counts consequently describe only the smaller population whose craft activity is recorded as a main job, leaving much of the practice through which skills are maintained and transmitted outside the workforce profile.

4.2 PRACTITIONER PROFILE

Jobs and Skills Australia's (n.d.-b) initial profiles based on the Occupation Standard Classification for Australia (OSCA) use experimental estimates derived from the 2021 Census. They record 8,600 people whose main job was classified as Visual Arts and Crafts Professional. Of this group, 54 per cent worked part-time, the median age was 49, 65.2 per cent were female and 5.4 per cent identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Arts and Recreation Services employed 65.6 per cent, while Manufacturing accounted for 11.3 per cent (JSA, n.d.-b).

The group contains materially different forms of practice. Potter or Ceramic Artist accounted for an estimated 890 people, 55.2 per cent of whom worked part-time and 75.5 per cent of whom were female; Manufacturing was identified as the principal employing industry. A further 2,900 people were classified as Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals not elsewhere classified, including glass artists, leadlighters, mosaic artists, printmakers, quilters and textile artists (JSA, n.d.-a, n.d.-c).

OSCA does not identify a craft sector. It places Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals within Arts and Media Professionals, while cabinetmakers, jewellers, stonemasons, instrument makers, textile-production workers, conservators, repairers and other craft-skilled practitioners are distributed across separate occupational groups. The Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification similarly contains no craft-industry division: enterprises are classified by their principal activity across Manufacturing, Construction, Arts and Recreation Services, Retail Trade and other industries. The figure of 8,600 represents one arts-based occupational subset, not the Australian craft workforce or sector as a whole (ABS, 2013a, 2024b).

Nor does the classification record the transmission of knowledge and skill. The Census-based OSCA profiles classify each employed person's main job; apprentices and trainees are generally coded to the occupation they are learning rather than identified as a separate transmission category. It does not record whether knowledge is being demonstrated, taught, observed, practised or passed between generations. The absence of transmission from the data does not mean that transmission is absent from practice. It means that the statistical system cannot identify whether the productive capability embodied in a workshop or practitioner is being renewed or is approaching loss.

Main-job coding leaves secondary practice unrecorded and can miss intermittent practice outside the Census reference week. A national practitioner profile must combine occupational and industry data with field of practice, employment form, hours, production setting, training pathway and transmission activity.



Figure 4.2. Census profile of Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals (OSCA 2317), 2021. Source: Jobs and Skills Australia (n.d.-b), based on ABS 2021 Census data. © Commonwealth of Australia, CC BY 4.0.
Graphic adapted by the Australian Crafts Alliance.

This profile captures one arts-based occupational group, not Australia's craft sector. Craft practitioners are dispersed across numerous classifications, while secondary, intermittent and unpaid practice may disappear from main-job data. OSCA also does not separately identify the transmission of knowledge through teaching, repetition and accumulated judgement. Australia records fragments of craft practice, but cannot show the sector—or its living knowledge—as a whole.



Charlotte Litteck | Image: Mandarine Montgomery

"Craft is held in higher regard in so many countries. Japan is an obvious example—one where it is held in the utmost regard. Across much of Europe and the UK, we tend to take that for granted. Having been in Australia for only ten years, the difference had not occurred to me until another craft practitioner pointed it out."

Charlotte Litteck, British-born, Melbourne-based wood artist.

4.3 WORKFORCE ESTIMATES AND UNDERUSED CAPABILITY

Three national estimates describe different populations within craft. Luckman and Tower (2023) identified 116,538 people employed in occupations requiring craft skills across the economy. Throsby and Petetskaya (2024) estimated 1,700 practising professional craft artists in 2021–22, while the Occupation Standard Classification for Australia records 8,600 people whose main job was classified as Visual Arts and Crafts Professional (JSA, n.d.-b).

These are not competing estimates. The first follows embodied making capability across industries; the second applies artistic and professional criteria; and the third represents one arts-based occupational group. Within the professional-artists series, the estimated number of craft practitioners fell from 5,500 in 1992–93 to 1,700 in 2021–22. This contraction concerns that defined population, while the larger craft-skills estimate, in which women were 23.6 per cent of workers, demonstrates craft's continuing reach across arts, manufacturing, trades, repair, education and other industries.

The employment estimates describe different populations. Luckman and Tower (2023) also estimated $19.2 billion in gross value added for their defined craft economy in 2021, providing a national economic measure within that study's boundaries. A comprehensive estimate for the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector as defined in this report would require additional mapping and economic modelling, with explicit treatment of overlapping occupations, industries and enterprise activities.

> The measurement gap also intersects with gender and migration. Women comprise 65.2 per cent of the OSCA Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals group, yet migration background and prior skills are not reported. Economy-wide analysis estimated that 44 per cent of recently arrived permanent migrants were underutilised relative to their qualifications. Modelling indicated that closing the utilisation gap with Australian-born workers could add an average of $9 billion to gross domestic product annually over 10 years (Deloitte Access Economics, 2024). A separate longitudinal study found that 67 per cent of women humanitarian entrants who had worked as managers or professionals before migration were not in paid work after 10 years in Australia (van Kooy et al., 2025).

These figures do not measure migrant participation in craft and cannot be added to craft-workforce totals. They establish a wider pattern in which knowledge and capability can exist while remaining unrecognised, underused or statistically invisible. For craft, where expertise may be acquired through practice, family, community and intergenerational transmission, future mapping should record prior occupation, field of practice, employment form, production setting, training pathway and transmission activity. Information about migration history should be collected voluntarily under appropriate data governance.





The European Crafts Alliance describes the introduction of the European Union's geographical-indication framework for craft and industrial products as:

"a recognition that place, technique, and local knowledge matter, and that they deserve safeguarding in a global market crowded with imitations."

European Crafts Alliance, 2025a

4.4 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION AND CRAFT ECOLOGIES

The OSCA profile provides a state distribution for the arts-classified Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals group. In 2021, 29.5 per cent lived in New South Wales and 27.4 per cent in Victoria, compared with 30.6 and 26.2 per cent of total employment in those states. Tasmania accounted for 4.4 per cent of Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals not elsewhere classified, more than twice its 2.1 per cent share of national employment; for the wider group shown in Figure 4.3 the figure is 3.8 per cent. This concentration identifies Tasmania as a priority for field-level investigation (JSA, n.d.-b, n.d.-c).

A craft geography connects practitioner residence with workshops, home-based production, material sources, training relationships, specialist equipment, supply chains and markets. These relationships form the productive infrastructure through which knowledge is applied and transmitted. Confidentiality and reliability suppression further obscure smaller occupations and regional concentrations.

The European Union Intellectual Property Office's (2024) study examined national legal frameworks, existing and pending craft and industrial geographical indications, potentially protectable product names, and public and private interest in protection across the 27 Member States. It provides a comparative example of identifying geographically rooted products alongside the legal and producer arrangements relevant to their protection (EUIPO, 2024).

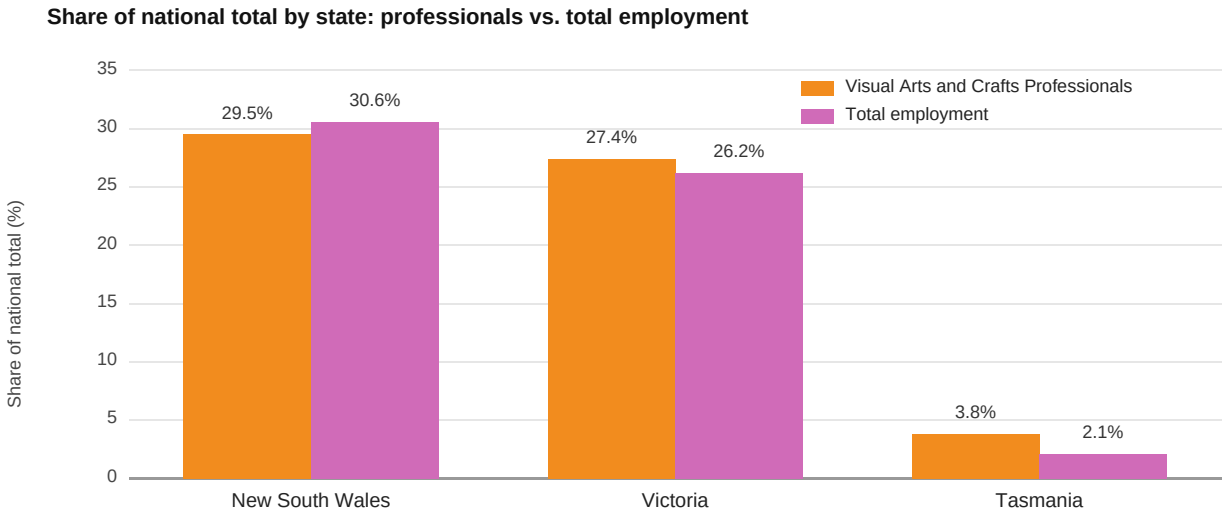


Figure 4.3. Selected states' shares of national employment: Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals (OSCA 2317) compared with total employment, 2021. Source: Jobs and Skills Australia (n.d.-b).

Australian mapping should establish regional craft-ecology records linking practitioners, materials, facilities, training pathways, production methods and markets. This would identify regional concentrations, infrastructure gaps, transmission risks, investment opportunities and products with potential for geographical-indication protection. Provenance evidence supplies the connection between people, product and place required to make those regional systems visible.



“Craft-based strategic entrepreneurship embraces creativity and innovation, alongside traditional values and high-quality production, to engage with the modern economy without the alienating effects of industrialization.”

Ganzin et al., 2024

4.5 MICRO-ENTERPRISE

Australian craft production commonly operates through self-employment and small, often home-based enterprises. One practitioner may design, make, source materials, document provenance, sell, teach and administer the business, with the studio and enterprise functioning as a single productive system (Luckman and Andrew, 2020). Business data may assign that practitioner to another industry or income source, leaving the craft enterprise statistically obscured.

Survey evidence demonstrates the prevalence of hybrid work. McQuilten et al. (2025) found that only 25 per cent of artist respondents devoted all their working time to artistic practice, while 82 per cent received income from additional work within or outside the arts sector. Among artists who also worked as arts workers, 38 per cent were self-employed. These findings show the importance of income from other work in sustaining practice; the study also documents substantial unpaid work within the arts sector.

Micro-enterprise is also a pathway for migrant and humanitarian communities. A 10-year longitudinal study found that 21 per cent of humanitarian migrants were self-employed, compared with 16 per cent of Australians overall. The study identified enterprise potential alongside necessity entrepreneurship arising from barriers to employment, professional recognition, capital, advice and networks (van Kooy et al., 2025).



Figure 4.4. Pottery studio

Micro-enterprise is an enduring form of craft production. Direct practitioner control over design, materials, making, teaching and documentation may be integral to the product and its provenance. This concentrated structure places market risk, administration, compliance costs and interruptions to income within one person or household. Sector measurement must record enterprise scale, economic viability, portfolio work, workshop infrastructure and transmission activity as separate dimensions.

4.6 ARTISAN PRODUCERS

Artisan Producers constitute a specific production setting within the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector. The category comprises individuals and enterprises engaged in small-scale agricultural, agrifood, craft food or beverage production within applicable field-specific limits. It includes producers working independently and enterprises employing staff, operating specialist equipment or contracting defined processing stages, provided that practitioners retain demonstrable involvement and control at one or more consequential stages of production.

That involvement and control are expressed through the decisions that materially determine the product. Depending on the field, these may include cultivation or ingredient selection, preparation, fermentation, blending, maturation, temperature control, preservation, batch assessment, storage and release. Recording these functions identifies where productive knowledge is held within the enterprise and how it is applied across repeated production.

Small scale cannot be represented by a single national volume threshold. Products are made through different processes, measured in different units and governed by different safety, licensing and commercial requirements. Queensland's artisan producer liquor licence illustrates a field-specific approach by applying separate annual production ranges to craft beer and artisan spirits while requiring production to be the principal activity conducted on the licensed premises (Queensland Government, 2023). Equivalent thresholds for other products would require evidence from the relevant field rather than extension of the Queensland liquor limits.

Current industry statistics do not identify Artisan Producers as a national producer population. Businesses are classified across agriculture, manufacturing, hospitality, wholesale and retail according to principal activity, while licensing and certification data are retained within separate regulatory systems (ABS, 2013a). Geographical-indication development will create a further source of structured producer information because applicants must define the product, place, production requirements and producer group associated with a proposed geographical name (DFAT, 2026b).

The sector baseline should identify Artisan Producers through field-specific records of enterprise scale, production volume, product and ingredient categories, production location, consequential processes, producer responsibility, workforce, knowledge transmission, licences and collective producer arrangements. Where geographical indications are relevant, the profile should also record the defined product, geographical area, production specification and eligible producer group. This would establish an evidence base for understanding small-scale agricultural, agrifood, craft food or beverage production and for supporting Australian producer groups entering the developing geographical-indication system.



Figure 4.5. Copper stills

5

The Craft Practitioner.

“Crafts-led innovation involves harnessing artistic and traditional craft skills, knowledge and techniques to develop new ideas, products or services.”

ekip, 2025

AU$19.2 BILLION IN GROSS VALUE ADDED

Estimated for the 116,538 people employed in Australian occupations requiring craft skills in 2021

Luckman and Tower, 2023

Illustrative vignette Two pathways into skilled practice

Two Australian children begin by learning with their hands.
One picks up a football. The other picks up clay, timber, leather, fibre or metal.

Both learn through repetition. An experienced person watches, demonstrates and corrects. Judgement develops slowly: how much pressure to apply, when to move, when to wait and how to recognise that something has been done well.

For the footballer, a pathway is already visible. There are junior clubs, coaches, facilities, competitions, qualifications, governing bodies and recognised stages of progression. Even without becoming a professional player, the child remains visible as a participant within Australian sport.

For some emerging makers, pathways are also clearly established. Carpentry, joinery, mechanics, engineering, building and other recognised trades have named occupations, qualifications, apprenticeships and stages of progression.

Many of the people working through these pathways are craft-skilled workers whose knowledge and judgement remain essential to Australian production.

The difference arises across the many forms of skilled making that sit between established trades, manufacturing, arts, education, cultural practice and micro-enterprise. Here, the emerging maker's teacher may be one ageing practitioner, a family member, a community workshop or a TAFE course that may not continue. They may eventually design, make, repair, teach, photograph, administer and sell their work—often while earning income elsewhere. When official statistics ask for their main job, the craft through which they have spent years developing capability may disappear.

The difference becomes visible in the data. One national study estimated only 1,700 practising professional craft artists in 2021–22. A wider occupational analysis identified 116,538 people working in occupations requiring craft skills and estimated their contribution at $19.2 billion in gross value added in 2021.

These figures describe different populations, but the distance between them demonstrates how profoundly the apparent size of craft changes when measurement extends beyond one narrowly defined professional category (Luckman and Tower, 2023; Throsby and Petetskaya, 2024).

For scale, a separate national analysis reconstructed sport across its different industries and estimated that it contributed $14.4 billion to gross domestic product and supported 128,000 full-time-equivalent jobs during 2016–17. Australia did not measure sport by counting professional athletes alone. It assembled players, coaches, organisations, facilities, education, media, technology and related commercial activity into a recognisable economic system (KPMG, 2020).

Craft has not yet received the same integrated institutional treatment. Its products are visible, while the people, relationships and accumulated knowledge embodied within them are distributed across multiple occupational, industry and cultural classifications. Within the visual arts and craft workforce, average income from practice was $13,937 in 2023–24, and 63 per cent of surveyed practitioners described themselves as very or moderately stressed about paying for essential goods and services (McQuilten et al., 2025).

This is the contradiction at the centre of the Craft Practitioner's working life: substantial value is created for industries, students, families, audiences and communities, yet that value is not reliably returned as income, security, recognition or progression.

UNESCO (2003) locates traditional craftsmanship primarily in the knowledge and skills held and transmitted by practitioners, rather than in finished products alone. An object may remain after the living practice that produced it has ceased to be transmitted (UNESCO, 2003). Some forms of skilled making have coherent institutional pathways. Others continue to depend largely on individual endurance.

The Craft Practitioner has not failed to follow a pathway. The national task is to recognise, connect and build the pathways through which their knowledge, work and contribution can endure.

Research note
This illustrative analytical vignette synthesises published evidence examined across Sections 3–6 and is informed by the author's professional experience. It is a constructed scenario, does not describe identified individuals and is not presented as participant testimony or independent primary research.

5.1 CAREER SUSTAINABILITY

Craft careers are sustained through a combination of skilled work, income, access to facilities, social protection and opportunities to develop responsibility over time. A practitioner may move among employment, commissions, self-employment, teaching and enterprise while continuing to use the same material knowledge. Continuity of practice can outlast any one job. Where working conditions interrupt the time needed to make, maintain equipment or develop competence, productive capacity can erode while the practitioner remains economically active in other work.

Australian research on craftspeople and designer makers records careers assembled through multiple forms of labour. Luckman and Andrew's (2020) study, based on 180 interviews and four years of fieldwork, shows how making is linked to sourcing, marketing, online presentation, customer relations and the management of a small business. These activities bring products to market and can give practitioners direct control over design and production. They also draw on the time and resources available for the skilled work that distinguishes the enterprise. For an employed maker, comparable pressures can arise through insecure orders, changing production methods and limited time for advanced practice.

Career progression takes different forms across the sector. It may involve increasing technical responsibility within a workshop, building a viable independent practice, moving into restoration or specialist production, supervising other makers, or gaining the capacity to teach. These routes need sustained access to materials, experienced colleagues and appropriate workplaces. An established practitioner may have extensive competence while remaining on irregular contracts or receiving low returns from a small enterprise. Progression has an economic and institutional dimension as well as a skill dimension: advanced knowledge must have work through which it can be exercised and rewarded.

The International Labour Organization (2022) identifies income, rights, social protection and participation in decisions affecting work as connected elements of decent work. This provides a useful framework for examining craft occupations whose working arrangements differ. Employees, contractors and owner-makers encounter different entitlements and forms of bargaining, yet each needs predictable ways to earn, respond to interruptions and continue practising. The same lens also brings attention to the time spent on supervision, maintenance and passing on knowledge, which is often essential to the productive life of a workshop.

A national account of craft careers should follow people across work arrangements and career stages, recording practice hours, income from different activities, working conditions, interruptions and return to practice. It should also identify whether experienced practitioners can remain in production while supervising or teaching others. Such evidence would connect the workforce estimates in the sector profile with the conditions under which skilled practice continues, revealing where the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector retains or loses capability over a working life.



Safeguarding traditional craftsmanship means focusing not on preserving craft objects, however beautiful, precious, rare or important, but on creating the conditions that encourage artisans to keep producing crafts and to pass their skills and knowledge to others, especially within their own communities.

—Adapted from UNESCO
Traditional craftsmanship, Intangible Cultural Heritage

5.2 PRACTITIONER INCOME

The income derived from craft must be understood at several levels. The sale price of an object is revenue to an enterprise; after materials, premises, equipment, freight, commissions and other costs, the remaining amount available to pay the practitioner may be much smaller. Earnings from a commission, wages, teaching, royalties or other employment can then contribute to total personal income. Keeping these measures separate makes it possible to describe both the economic activity generated by craft and the livelihood of the person whose skill sustains it.

Throsby and Petetskaya's (2024) study of professional artists offers a craft-specific indication. Among its 18 craft practitioners with usable income data, median gross creative income in 2021–22 was $10,500 and median gross income from all sources was $30,500. The corresponding means were $23,800 and $43,700. The difference between medians and means shows why reporting an average alone obscures the position of practitioners at the lower end of the distribution. The published tables adjust creative income for COVID-19 Disaster Payments and exclude respondents with gross creative income of $250,000 or more. These results describe a small professional-artist sample and cannot establish income levels across the wider craft workforce (Throsby and Petetskaya, 2024, tables 8.1–8.2).

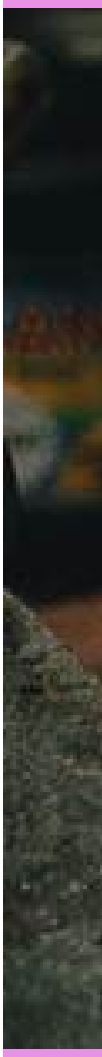
A later survey of the visual arts and craft workforce found mean income from visual art or craft practice of $13,937 in 2023–24. In the same survey, 63 per cent of respondents described themselves as very or moderately stressed about paying for essential goods and services (McQuilten et al., 2025). This finding measures perceived financial stress in meeting essential costs. The survey encompasses visual and craft workers, while the Creative Australia craft figures refer to a smaller occupational group. Both locate practitioner earnings within working lives that draw on several income sources.

The historical evidence shows how persistent the income question has been. National mapping reported median annual creative income of $10,000 from 2007–08 data, and 68.2 per cent of respondents to its 2013 National Craft Initiative survey earned $10,000 or less from craft practice (Heath and Pascoe, 2014). MacNeill et al. (2022) show that, among visual artists and craft practitioners in earlier professional-artist data, work in the principal artistic occupation contributed less than half of total personal income. Together, they establish the continuing importance of distinguishing practice-derived earnings from total personal income.

An Australian income series should identify wages, fees, sales revenue, business expenses, net returns, supplementary earnings and household resources by field and work arrangement. It should report medians, means and distributions over successive years, with attention to region, gender and career stage. This would show where production generates a sustainable personal return, where other work finances the practice, and how costs and changing demand affect a practitioner's ability to remain in the field.

5.3 SOCIAL PROTECTION

Access to leave, superannuation and income during an interruption depends on the arrangement under which craft work is performed. Permanent full-time and part-time employees accrue paid annual leave, while casual employees have a different set of entitlements. Eligible full-time, part-time and casual employees receive compulsory employer superannuation; a contractor paid mainly for their labour may also qualify under the superannuation rules (Fair Work Ombudsman, 2026a, 2026b). A sole trader running their own business can make personal superannuation contributions, while responsibility for building retirement savings from their own earnings rests with them (Australian Taxation Office, 2024).



A craft workforce moves between employment and independent production, and each form of work carries different entitlements. A practitioner might work on wages in a manufacturing workshop, take a contract to restore an object and sell products through a small business during the same career. Each activity can have a different relationship to leave, insurance, payment timing and retirement saving. The legal character of the working relationship affects entitlements and the allocation of financial risk; describing a person as a contractor does not by itself determine their employment status (Fair Work Ombudsman, n.d.). Following work arrangements over time shows the protection actually available to a practitioner.

Throsby and Petetskaya's (2024) professional-artist study gives an indication of longer-term security within its craft subgroup. One third of the surveyed craft practitioners reported an employer-contributed superannuation arrangement; 43 per cent identified personal savings or investments as a source of future financial support (Throsby and Petetskaya, 2024). These overlapping responses from a small group show how retirement planning may draw on a mixture of employment history, business income and personal assets. A person who owns tools and stock may hold productive assets while having limited liquid income to draw on during a break from work.

Income protection also has a contractual dimension. NAVA's (2026) Code of Practice for Visual Arts, Craft and Design addresses written agreements, payment terms and the allocation of responsibilities when work is sold through wholesale or consignment arrangements (NAVA, 2026). For independent practitioners, the timing of payment and responsibility for transport, insurance, damage and unsold work affect the resources available during a period of slow sales. These terms are particularly consequential when the maker funds materials and preparatory labour before receiving payment. Clear contractual practices support financial stability alongside statutory workplace protections.

Australian workforce statistics should record the actual form of each craft work arrangement, access to paid leave and superannuation, payment timing, and the financial effect of illness or care. This evidence would identify groups for whom existing protections operate effectively and the circumstances in which a skilled practitioner carries the full cost of interrupted production. It would also give employment and sector policy a common view of how sustainable craft work is organised across salaried, casual, contracted and independent practice.

5.4 SKILLED LABOUR WITHIN PRODUCTION

A craft product can embody the work of several practitioners even when it reaches the market under one business name. An independent maker may perform each production stage, while a workshop may divide design, material preparation, skilled fabrication, finishing and repair among employees and contractors. The person who sells or coordinates the product may also make part of it. Understanding the practitioner's working life requires attention to who exercises judgement at each stage, the terms on which they work and how their contribution is acknowledged.



These arrangements vary across material fields. A garment may pass among a designer, patternmaker, cutter, machinist and finisher; a building restoration may involve a stonemason, joiner and specialist conservator; a ceramic studio may rely on skilled preparation, throwing, glazing and firing. Decisions made during each stage affect the result and may carry different levels of responsibility, remuneration and opportunity to develop skill. Employment status and the organisation of production shape who can make those decisions and who is visible when the work is sold or documented.

Throsby and Petetskaya's (2024) study of professional craft artists shows several routes through which the same broad field generates income. In 2021–22, respondents reported sales of work, fixed-fee freelance contracts, commissions, casual employment and business profit, with more than one route available to an individual (Throsby and Petetskaya, 2024). The study describes a small professional-artist group and shows the range of relationships through which craft labour can be supplied and paid. Across the wider sector, salaried workshop staff, apprentices, specialist subcontractors and owner-makers add further arrangements that occupational and enterprise statistics register in different places.

Product attribution and labour recognition are related through these production relationships. A brand can identify the enterprise that takes commercial responsibility for a line of goods, while the skilled people involved may change between products or batches. Recording the contribution of practitioners supports accurate accounts of work and provides evidence of specialist experience for future employment, commissions and teaching. Where First Nations cultural practice is involved, the relevant cultural authorities determine how knowledge, names and contributions may be identified or shared. Consent and appropriate control over records form part of recognising the work itself.

The practitioner account needs to follow work within production, including role, contribution, employment relationship and opportunities to exercise judgement. These relationships give practical meaning to maker and producer status across products made by one person, a workshop or a network of specialists. They also allow a sector estimate to connect individual capability with the workshops, enterprises and collaborative production on which continued employment depends.

5.5 TIME AND UNPAID WORK

Time is a basic resource of craft production. Making draws on periods of concentration, preparation, trial, correction and finishing, while a working practice also requires administration, sourcing, maintenance, presentation and customer contact. Some of this time appears in a price or wage; other hours are absorbed by the practitioner as part of maintaining access to future work. The balance affects how much skilled production can be undertaken, how earnings should be interpreted and whether a career leaves room for advanced practice.

Throsby and Petetskaya's (2024) professional-artist study recorded an average 44-hour working week among 29 craft practitioners in 2021–22. On average, 36 per cent of their time was spent on creative work in their principal artistic occupation and 16 per cent on activities supporting that work; another 12 per cent went to creative work in other art forms, 25 per cent to arts-related activity and 11 per cent to work outside the arts (Throsby and Petetskaya, 2024). The supporting category includes the organisation and presentation of practice. These figures describe how the surveyed professional-artist group divided its working hours.

The same study found that 62 per cent of craft respondents who spent less than all of their work time on creative practice wanted to devote more time to it (Throsby and Petetskaya, 2024). In a separate 2024 survey of visual arts and craft workers, nearly half of respondents had participated in unpaid arts work (McQuilten et al., 2025). The findings point to different pressures: tasks required to sustain one's own enterprise, unpaid contributions to other organisations or projects, and supplementary work undertaken to support an income. Each has a different economic role, and each affects the hours available to make.



Time spent developing a design, teaching a newcomer or maintaining specialist equipment also contributes to future production. Those activities can become difficult to support when a commission pays only for the finished object or when a retail price must absorb every stage of work. Caring responsibilities and the location of a workplace influence when such time can be found. The effects accumulate over a career: postponed training, reduced production hours and limited opportunities to mentor can narrow the pool of experienced practitioners available to a material field.

Measurement should distinguish hours of paid making, unpaid production, business administration, learning, supervision and work undertaken outside the practice. Connecting time to income and employment form would show the effective return for skilled labour and the resources needed to reproduce it. It would also support evaluation of commissions, access to shared facilities and other arrangements that free practitioner time for production and knowledge transfer.

5.6 REMUNERATION AND VALUE DISTRIBUTION

The price received for a craft product travels through several relationships before it becomes income for the people who made it. A direct sale, a wholesale order, a retail consignment and a commissioned work allocate costs, risk and payment at different points. Materials, workshop overheads, transport, intermediary margins and tax obligations affect what remains available for wages or the owner-maker's return. Analysing these arrangements explains how a growing market can coexist with modest earnings for the skilled labour on which it relies.

The National Association for the Visual Arts' (2026) Code of Practice for Visual Arts, Craft and Design provides a current Australian benchmark for parts of this field. Its payment guidance addresses fees for creating work, employment and freelance rates, while its selling guidance covers pricing, consignment terms, commissions and written agreements. These standards give practitioners and commissioners a basis for negotiating the labour component of a project alongside production expenses. The Code provides professional guidance within visual arts, craft and design. Employment obligations arise under applicable legislation, awards and agreements, while commercial terms are negotiated within the relevant legal framework.

Both the timing and amount of remuneration shape the return to a practitioner. An independent maker can pay for materials and spend weeks making before a retailer sells the product; a workshop employee may be paid throughout production while the business carries the sales risk. Deposits, stage payments and clear due dates allocate that risk more transparently. Written terms can also identify who funds rework, who retains rights to a design and whether a practitioner's name or production history may be used in marketing. These are practical conditions governing the value of labour, especially in small workshops with limited reserves.

Verification of origin, production method or assessed craftsmanship gives buyers evidence about the attributes claimed for a product, and European evidence shows that verified origin is associated with higher sales values (European Commission, 2020). Recording sales, assessment costs, wages, fees and the distribution of proceeds shows how that value reaches each practitioner. Provenance can help identify the people and stages involved; payment arrangements determine the economic return to each contributor. The separation is most visible where a recognised producer, label or regional name is associated with work undertaken by multiple skilled people.

Australian evaluation should follow both market value and practitioner return, recording retail and wholesale prices, production costs, fees, wages, commissions, payment delays and the share retained by makers. This connects evidence about consumer demand to the conditions of production. A credible claim of economic benefit for craft practitioners rests on showing that skilled people receive a durable return for their labour as markets and recognition systems develop.



Tammy Gilson is a proud Wadawurrung woman and multi-award-winning traditional weaver living on Wadawurrung Country
Image: Australian Centre for Rare Arts & Forgotten Trades

"As a Wadawurrung woman, weaving connects me to Country, our language, our plants, our stories and the knowledge carried by generations before us. Safeguarding First Nations craftsmanship means supporting us to continue making and teaching, while ensuring our communities retain authority over how our cultural knowledge, designs and stories are shared, represented and protected in accordance with Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) rights and principles. My work aims to inspire and bridge traditional knowledge and contemporary expression, creating a powerful narrative to be celebrated."

6

Skills Attainment and Transmission

“This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history…”

UNESCO, 2003
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Article 2

6.1 MASTER AND APPRENTICE LEARNING

Australian apprenticeships combine paid employment and supervised workplace practice with formal study through a registered training organisation. The workplace is a principal site of learning, not simply the place in which a completed curriculum is applied. In craft occupations, material judgement develops through demonstration, repetition, correction and exposure to variations that cannot be fully anticipated within a written competency standard (Calvert, 2014).

Formal education provides shared technical and safety knowledge and a qualification recognised beyond the individual workshop. Sustained work beside an experienced practitioner performs a different function. Calvert's (2014) autoethnographic study of a two-year violinmaking apprenticeship found that the one-to-one relationship between master and apprentice was central to the transmission of practice. The relationship allowed decisions to be observed and corrected as materials and problems changed.

National apprenticeship data provide essential evidence of participation and completion. Planning for craft skill transmission also requires information about the workplaces in which apprentices learn: the specialisms taught, the availability of experienced supervisors, access to equipment and opportunities for continued employment and progression. Bringing these sources together would help identify where training is sustaining specialist craft capability and where targeted support could strengthen teaching capacity and succession.

Germany gives this teaching responsibility formal occupational standing. Within regulated crafts, the Meister qualification brings together advanced practice, enterprise capability and authority to train apprentices, supported by chambers, examinations and recognised progression (Laczik et al., 2024). This provides a reference point for recognising experienced Australian practitioners whose work combines skilled production, teaching and responsibility for workshop standards.

Strengthening Australia's craft industry requires support for the enterprises and practitioners through whom this learning occurs. Skills policy should recognise advanced craft expertise and teaching responsibility, support the time and resources required to supervise apprentices, and connect workplace learning with accessible formal training and progression. National mapping should identify where this capacity exists and where it is at risk, providing a basis for targeted investment in teaching workshops and succession. The purpose is to help enterprises develop skilled successors, retain specialist knowledge and sustain the productive capacity on which their future depends.



Simon Martin, Managing Director and Head Craftsman | Image: Jasper De Seymour

CASE STUDY 06

SIMON MARTIN WHIPS & LEATHERCRAFT

Simon Martin Whips & Leathercraft
Spreyton, Tasmania—a contemporary master and apprentice

Simon Martin Whips & Leathercraft provides a contemporary Australian example of the master-apprentice model operating inside a commercially viable craft workshop. The model combines sustained employment, direct instruction by experienced practitioners, repeated production work and nationally recognised training. This arrangement connects skill transmission with continuing production: apprentices learn within a workshop that must also meet customer demand, maintain quality and convert specialised knowledge into durable Australian-made goods.

Simon Martin first learned leatherwork at high school in Tasmania under teacher Trevor Barrenger in 1994. After leaving school at fifteen, he initially followed his family into bricklaying, completing an apprenticeship and receiving Tasmania's Best Apprentice award across the building and construction trades. He began making whips as a hobby in 2002 and moved into the work full-time in 2004, establishing the business in his parents' garage when he was twenty-one. A retail and manufacturing outlet followed in Devonport in 2005. In 2007, Martin was awarded a Level 4 Australian Trade Certificate in whipmaking and saddlery and received first place and a Standard of Excellence award at the Sydney Royal Easter Show (Simon Martin Whips & Leathercraft, n.d.).

The business employed its first apprentice, Andrew, in 2008. Andrew completed his apprenticeship and qualified as a craftsperson and whipmaker. William joined the business in 2010 and is now identified by the company as its Master Craftsman and Head Saddler, producing and repairing saddles and other horse equipment. Bonnie, who joined in 2018, has progressed to the position of Master Craftsman, producing handbags, wallets, knife sheaths and other custom leatherwork. These pathways show how entry-level learning can develop into specialised and senior workshop roles rather than ending with the completion of a qualification.

By 2026, Martin had trained five apprentices over the business's twenty-two-year history. Three had completed their apprenticeships and two remained in progress (Simon Martin Whips & Leathercraft, n.d.). The record shows that apprenticeship has been used by the workshop not only as a training arrangement, but as a means of building and renewing production capability. Qualified makers and senior staff have emerged from within the business, carrying forward skills that would otherwise depend on individual self-teaching or short-form instruction.

One of the workshop's two current apprentices, Tom Hill, joined the business at the beginning of 2025. He is undertaking an apprenticeship pathway through the Certificate III qualification currently available for leather production. His practical instruction takes place under Martin inside the Spreyton workshop, where he contributes to saleable work while progressively learning the standards and processes of the trade. The formal component is supported by an interstate training provider whose representatives travel to Tasmania, demonstrating both the adaptability of the apprenticeship arrangement and the thinness of the supporting training infrastructure (Reid, 2026; Simon Martin Whips & Leathercraft, n.d.).



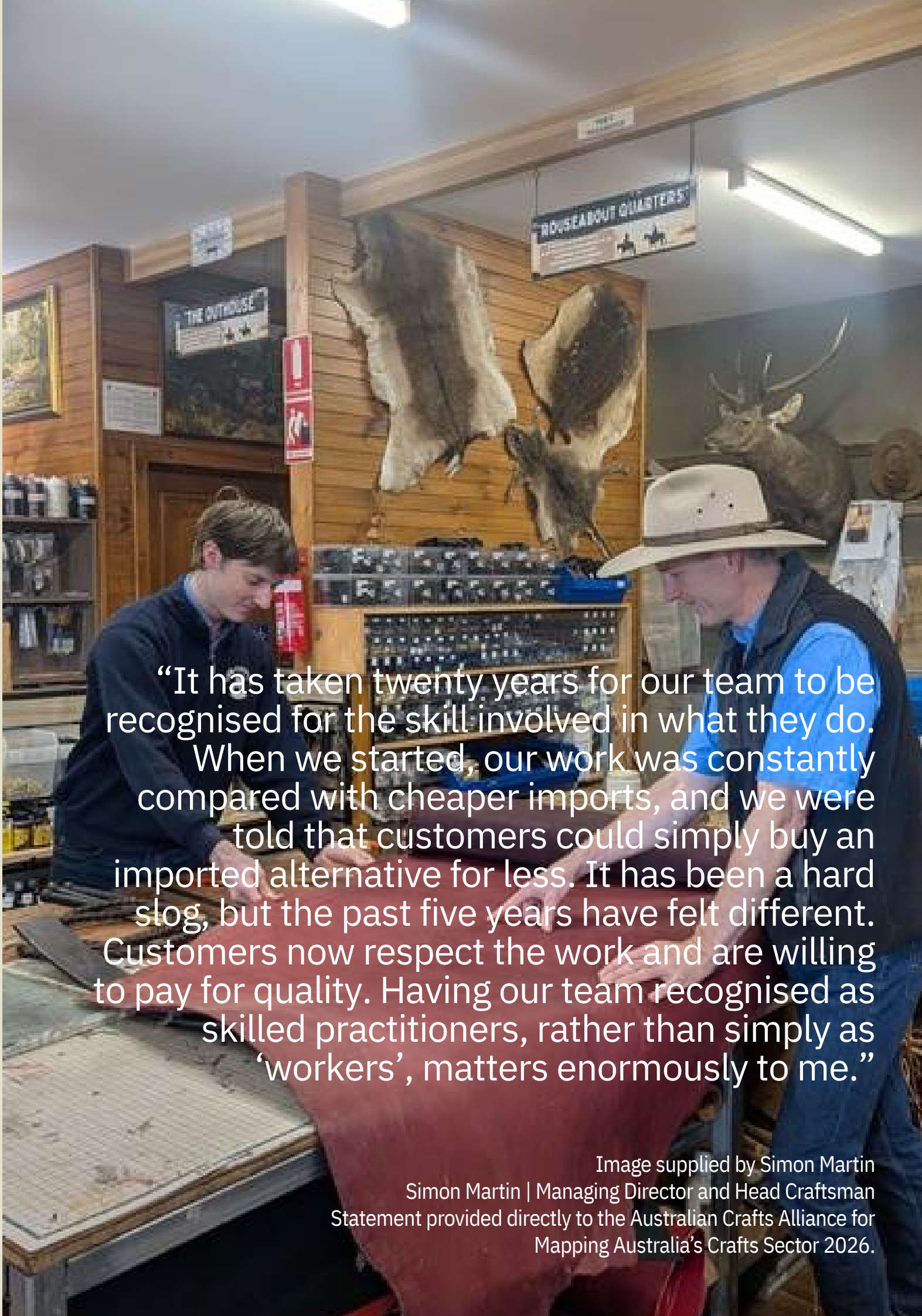


The knowledge being transmitted is not confined to the physical act of plaiting a whip. It includes material selection and preparation, pattern and strand preparation, plaiting sequences, tension and balance, finishing, repair, quality assessment and the relationship between a tool's construction and its performance. Apprentices also encounter the commercial knowledge needed to sustain a specialist practice: costing labour-intensive work, managing commissions, speaking with customers, maintaining consistency and explaining the value of an Australian-made product in a market dominated by cheaper production.

The model rests on conditions developed over more than two decades: specialist demand, a functioning workshop, experienced supervision and access to accredited training. Whipmaking also holds a distinctive place within Australian rural culture, sport and performance. The term "master-apprentice" is used here to describe the functional learning relationship through which an experienced practitioner transmits specialist knowledge to an apprentice through sustained work in a shared workshop. The recognised formal qualification is the Certificate III pathway, while the company's use of "Master Craftsman" identifies senior workshop responsibility and demonstrated expertise.

Evidence from Spreyton shows that workshop-based skill transmission can operate alongside accredited education and lead to apprenticeship completion, continuing employment and progression into senior craft roles. It also shows that this outcome depends upon infrastructure that is currently fragile. The employer must provide the workshop, tools, supervision, work and commercial demand, while the formal training system must remain sufficiently available to recognise and support the skill being acquired. If either side is absent, the pathway may not exist.

Simon Martin Whips & Leathercraft represents a working transmission system. A traditional skill remains economically active because experienced practitioners teach it within production, apprentices receive time and supervised repetition, and the enterprise converts accumulated knowledge into saleable work, repair services and continuing skilled employment.



“It has taken twenty years for our team to be recognised for the skill involved in what they do. When we started, our work was constantly compared with cheaper imports, and we were told that customers could simply buy an imported alternative for less. It has been a hard slog, but the past five years have felt different. Customers now respect the work and are willing to pay for quality. Having our team recognised as skilled practitioners, rather than simply as ‘workers’, matters enormously to me.”

Image supplied by Simon Martin

Simon Martin | Managing Director and Head Craftsman

Statement provided directly to the Australian Crafts Alliance for Mapping Australia’s Crafts Sector 2026.

6.2 TAFE AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION



TAFE remains the principal public provider of trade education and delivered the formal training component for 62.9 per cent of apprentices and trainees in trade occupations in 2025 (NCVER, 2026a). Craft-relevant qualifications are distributed across creative arts, textiles, furnishing, manufacturing, engineering and construction training packages (training.gov.au, 2026).

Commonwealth loan policy has shaped which craft qualifications students can finance. The introduction of VET Student Loans in 2017 removed general loan access from several specialist creative qualifications, including ceramics and jewellery and object design. The current approved list includes the Advanced Diploma of Jewellery and Object Design, while the Diploma of Ceramics and Diploma of Jewellery and Object Design receive support through specified providers (DEWR, 2026b). Registration, delivery and financial access remain separate conditions, allowing a qualification to persist administratively after the pathway has narrowed in practice.

Austria formalises continuing progression across 79 skilled crafts and 39 regulated non-craft trades. Since September 2018, the Meister qualification has been placed at National Qualifications Framework Level 6, the same framework level as a bachelor's degree, while remaining vocational in form. The combined number of successful Meisterprüfung and Befähigungsprüfung qualifications reached 5,114 in 2021 (Laczik et al., 2024).

Germany places the Meister at European Qualifications Framework Level 6 and introduced the formal title Bachelor Professional through the 2020 Vocational Training Act. Fifty-three legally established Chambers of Crafts operate more than 600 training centres. Aufstiegs-BAföG, formerly known as Meister-BAföG, provides financial assistance for eligible advanced vocational training through grants and loans, with loan-remission provisions following successful completion and qualifying business establishment (Laczik et al., 2024). The system connects advanced technical practice with enterprise capability and responsibility for training.

Slovenia introduced the Mojster qualification in 2000, drawing on German experience after independence. It covers 52 craft titles and combines practical, theoretical, managerial and pedagogical assessment within secondary technical education (Laczik et al., 2024). Sweden's Mästare certificate is organised through the Swedish Crafts Council and covers approximately 305 craft occupations. Candidates are active in their field and generally document at least 4,000 hours of validated experience, rising to 10,000 hours in some crafts, before progressing through the journeyman and master pathway (Laczik et al., 2024).

These systems recognise advanced practice through different qualification levels, institutions and routes. Their shared contribution is a visible stage beyond initial competence that combines mastery, enterprise knowledge, leadership and transmission. Australia has trade certificates, diplomas and degrees, but no widely recognised cross-craft vocational tier performing this function. The resulting gap affects progression as well as course provision: experienced practitioners can deepen their capability without becoming institutionally visible as advanced craftspeople and trainers. Laczik et al. (2024) caution that these arrangements depend on their institutional histories and social partnerships; adopting a master title alone would not reproduce their outcomes.

6.3 UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Universities contribute to craft through specialist studio education, material investigation, critical inquiry and independent practice. Crafts and Jewellery Making are recognised within the Australian Standard Classification of Education, although these categories do not encompass the full range of craft-skilled occupations (ABS, 2001a). Material disciplines also sit within broader degrees: ANU's Bachelor of Visual Arts includes ceramics, glass and textiles (Australian National University, 2026).

RMIT's fine-art provision connects ceramics and jewellery with specialist workshops, kilns, a glaze laboratory and metal-fabrication facilities. Lecturers, technicians and practising artists support this environment (RMIT University, 2026). These resources enable supervised experimentation, technical instruction and the development of material judgement: capabilities that depend on continuing investment in people, facilities and studio access.

Continuity cannot be assumed. Gattenhof and Saunders (2026), drawing on National Advocates for Arts Education surveys, report 48 creative-arts degrees discontinued between 2018 and 2025, alongside reductions in courses and majors. Their analysis documents pathways removed, majors reduced to minors and degrees absorbed into broader qualifications. This is evidence of wider educational contraction, although it does not quantify craft workshop closures.

University craft education depends on sustained relationships between specialist teachers, technical staff, students and well-equipped workshops. Together, these provide the conditions for repeated practice, material experimentation and the transmission of knowledge that cannot be acquired through theory alone. Retaining a degree title does not, by itself, demonstrate that this capacity has been maintained. Assessing provision therefore requires attention to specialist staffing, workshop access, time for sustained studio practice and opportunities to progress into advanced study and professional practice. These are the capabilities that a national mapping of craft education needs to make visible.

The policy question is therefore how universities can sustain and renew this specialist capacity across generations. Recognising material disciplines within institutional planning would allow staffing, facilities and progression pathways to be considered together, while cooperation between institutions could connect areas of expertise and extend learning opportunities. This directs attention towards the arrangements through which craft remains an active field of teaching, research and professional development.

International examples show how specialist craft education can retain an identifiable institutional presence. Tokyo University of the Arts traces its crafts provision to 1889, with defined material practices at undergraduate and graduate levels. NordTradCraft connects eight Nordic and Baltic universities through traditional craft studies, research, teaching and exchanges (Tokyo University of the Arts, n.d.; University of Tartu, n.d.).



“The spirit and techniques of crafts, based on a historical tradition, correspond to one of the most familiar arts... Craft objects made with carefully selected materials and drawing on traditional techniques offer inspiration in our daily lives.”

—Tokyo University of the Arts, n.d.



6.4 APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS

Australian apprenticeships and traineeships combine a formal training contract, paid employment, supervised workplace learning and a nationally recognised qualification delivered by a registered training organisation. Responsibility is distributed among employers, training providers, state and territory training authorities and Australian Government support arrangements.

At 31 December 2025, Australia had 282,430 active apprentice and trainee contracts, including 208,950 in trade occupations. Trade contracts in training had declined by 5.2 per cent over the preceding year. Approximately 82 per cent were concentrated in Construction Trades; Automotive and Engineering Trades; and Electrotechnology and Telecommunications Trades. The national apprenticeship system is substantial, but its activity is concentrated within a limited number of occupational groups. Published headline data do not isolate the smaller craft-skilled occupations distributed within and beyond those groups (NCVER, 2026a).

Recognised Australian apprenticeship pathways already encompass several occupations within the sector defined by this report. The Australian Apprenticeships Priority List operating from 1 January 2026 included cabinet maker, furniture maker, jeweller, upholsterer, stonemason, glazier, shipwright and boat builder and repairer, together with associated Certificate III and higher qualifications. Other fields occupy a different institutional position. The CUA51225 Diploma of Ceramics is a nationally recognised VET qualification, but ceramics is not identified through the Priority List as a dedicated apprenticeship occupation. Austria's recognition of Ceramicist and Sweden's recognition of Potter within journeyman and master structures demonstrate how occupational progression can be established beyond institutional course completion (DEWR, 2026c; training.gov.au, 2026; Laczik et al., 2024).

For trade apprenticeships commencing in 2019, the six-year completion rate was 58.7 per cent. Around half commenced with employers of fewer than 20 people, while completion rates ranged from 55.3 per cent among micro-employers with up to four employees to 65.9 per cent among employers with 200 or more (NCVER, 2026b). These national results are not craft-specific, and the association with employer size does not establish causation. For a sector containing many small workshops, they nevertheless identify questions that a craft-pathway audit must examine: access to supervision, continuity of suitable work, provider availability and the resources required to sustain training through completion.

Jobs and Skills Australia's Training Occupation Pathways dataset maps VET qualifications to OSCA occupations and distinguishes occupation-ready, specialised and progression pathways (JSA, 2026b). A national craft-pathway audit should connect this mapping with jurisdictional apprenticeship declarations, actual provider delivery, training contracts, employer participation, workshop infrastructure and supervisor capability. It should distinguish a qualification that is registered from a pathway that is available locally, supported by an employer and completed by learners. Completion should then be considered alongside opportunities for further specialisation and transmission. This would identify where Australia has functioning craft-training pathways, where access is geographically restricted and where formal recognition exists without the conditions needed for sustained delivery.

6.5 COMMUNITY AND JOB TRAINING

Community and independent provision constitutes an indispensable but unquantified part of Australia's craft training system. It includes guilds, community education providers, shared workshops, specialist studios, First Nations community-controlled organisations, regional arts centres, professional associations and independent practitioners. These settings provide access to specialist equipment, material knowledge, repeated practice, peer assessment and long-term mentoring. They may support initial participation, occupational entry, advanced specialisation or the continuation of practices for which no formal course remains available.

Provision spans nationally recognised VET, non-accredited courses, masterclasses, private tuition, residencies and informal intergenerational transmission. These forms are not interchangeable. An introductory workshop may widen participation, while sustained instruction can develop production competence, professional judgement and the capacity to teach others. Current administrative categories do not consistently record the level reached, the teaching relationship, the equipment used or whether learning leads to employment, enterprise, further training or independent practice.

National VET statistics capture nationally recognised training delivered by community education providers, but providers are not required to report non-nationally recognised activity through the Total VET Activity collection (NCVER, 2021, 2026c). Consequently, Australia has no national measure of the number of people teaching or learning craft through independent and community settings, the disciplines available, their geographical distribution or the progression they enable.

Government supports community delivery elsewhere in skills policy, including up to $77 million for foundation-skills training through Adult and Community Education under the five-year National Skills Agreement commencing in 2024 (DEWR, 2026d). Support for independent and community craft learning is distributed across education, arts and local programs rather than organised through a dedicated national craft-training framework. Competitive project funding provides another source of support: Creative Australia (n.d.-a) reported a 12 per cent success rate among 2,307 eligible applications to the Arts Projects round closing on 3 March 2026. Such project funding does not, by itself, establish continuing support for specialist facilities, equipment and teaching.

A national craft-pathway audit should record providers, teachers, disciplines, facilities, delivery forms, practice levels and learner progression across accredited and non-accredited provision. This would identify where community infrastructure complements formal education, where it has become the principal means of occupational transmission and where significant knowledge depends upon individual teachers, volunteers or short-term funding. Australia must also connect functions currently divided among arts grants, education, apprenticeships and business programs. The QEST example that follows demonstrates how a dedicated intermediary can integrate practitioner development, transmission and external investment within one continuing system.

INTERNATIONAL MODEL:
THE QUEEN ELIZABETH SCHOLARSHIP TRUST

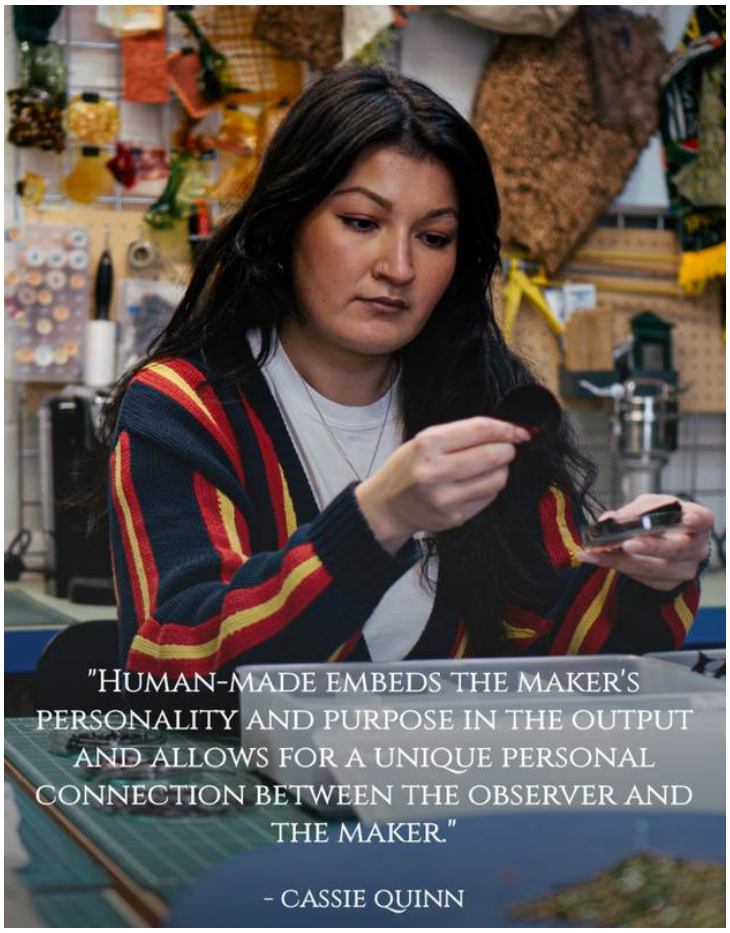
The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust provides an integrated United Kingdom model of craft-career development. Since 1990, QEST (n.d.-a) has awarded more than £7.5 million to over 900 makers and conservators across 130 disciplines. Its current impact summary reports that 92 per cent of alumni from the last ten years are still practising and that 72 per cent of alumni now teach or train others (QEST, n.d.-b).

QEST supports a continuum rather than one form of training. Its grants support professional makers and conservators at different career stages: Emerging Maker Grants support early-career development, Scholarships enable mid-career to established practitioners to refine, deepen or innovate their practice, and Apprenticeships support practical skills transfer through workplace-based training. Training may include formal courses, vocational one-to-one tuition with a master craftsperson or bespoke combinations of short courses. Alongside these grants, QEST's partnership programs build earlier and more inclusive routes into craft careers through Craft&Making Clubs, Making the Future and the Know-How Craft Studio. In 2026, QEST also launched Tradition in Transition: Youth Journeys Through Heritage Craft, combining regional CraftLab programs, Craft Career Kickstarter micro-grants and a digital Craft Traditions Library for underrepresented young people aged 16–25. Tradition in Transition was made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund (QEST, n.d.-a).

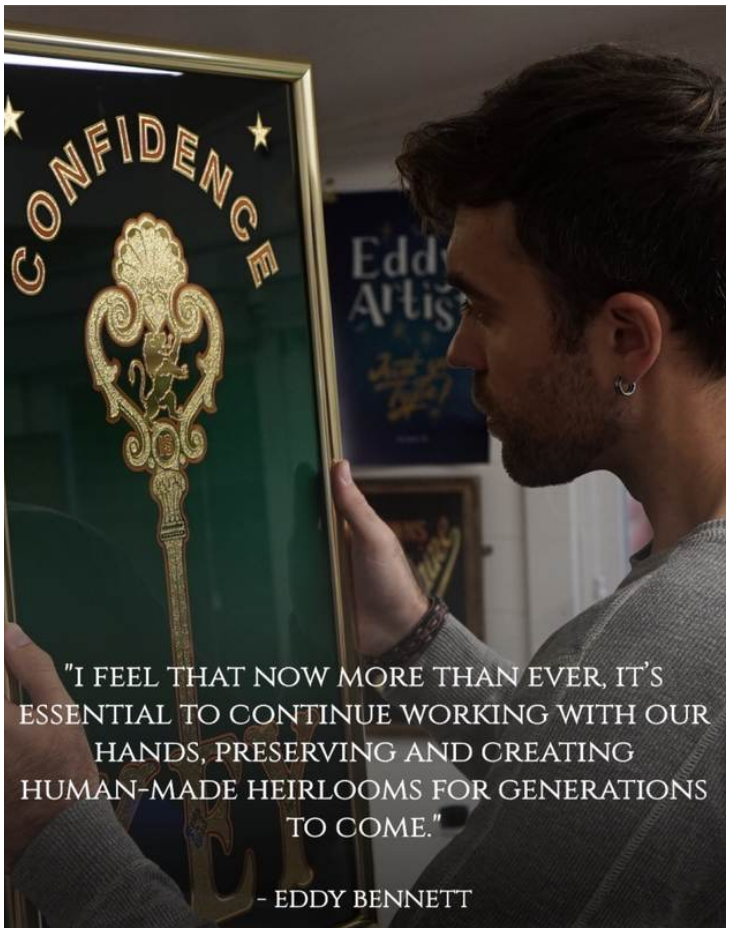
Support continues beyond the initial grant through QEST's alumni directory, professional networks and opportunities for exhibitions, collaborations and commissions. This connects individual training with longer-term practice, employment, professional visibility and later transmission.

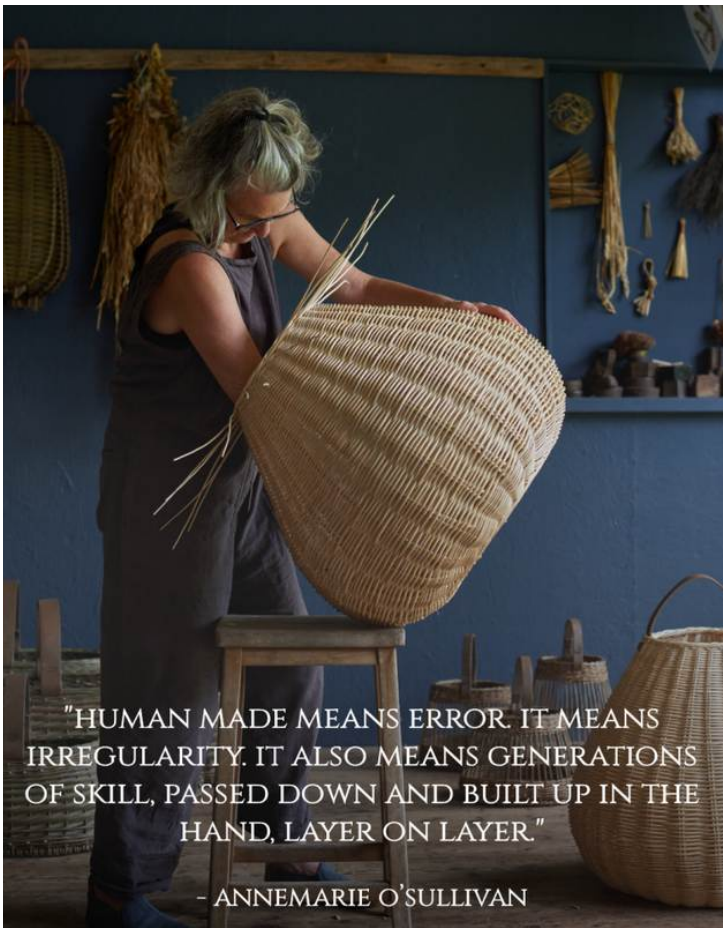
QEST also creates clear routes for external investment. *Fund a Maker* directs support towards an individual's training at a critical career stage, while *Fund a Programme* supports strategic initiatives intended to strengthen the wider craft sector. Benefactor, patron and Align Your Brand pathways enable philanthropic and commercial partners to contribute to skills development and sector-building activity (QEST, n.d.-b).

QEST supports career discovery, individual development, specialist training, apprenticeship, professional connection, external investment and transmission as related parts of craft-sector development. The model provides practitioners with routes to enter, deepen, sustain and ultimately pass on their practice over time.









Featured in The Future is Human Made: Hands, Work, Power.
From left to right: Cassie Quinn, regenerative designer; Sophie Sellu, object maker; Eddy Bennett, reverse-glass artist; Annemarie O'Sullivan, basketmaker.

Symposium images | Image: Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust

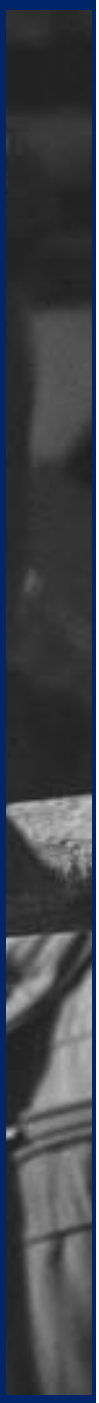


“Sustained investment in training and apprenticeships is essential to ensuring that specialist craft skills are not only preserved but continue to evolve and thrive. At QEST, we believe access to high-quality training, alongside meaningful opportunities to learn directly from experienced makers, creates the foundations for resilient creative careers. Australia’s emerging national framework presents an important opportunity to invest in skills, people and the knowledge that makes craft possible.”

— Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust (QEST)

Statement provided directly to the Australian Crafts Alliance for Mapping Australia’s Crafts Sector 2026.

Deborah Carré, handsewn shoemaker, skiving leather
Image: Jonathan Stewart, QEST



6.6 INFORMAL AND NON-FORMAL LEARNING

Education research distinguishes informal from non-formal learning. Non-formal learning is planned and intentional, with defined learning support, but occurs outside formal education or does not necessarily lead to a recognised qualification. Informal learning arises through work, family, leisure and everyday practice and is not organised around defined objectives, time or teaching arrangements (Cedefop, 2022; European Commission and Cedefop, 2024).

Craft practitioners commonly combine both forms. Observation, family and intergenerational transmission, workplace experience, experimentation, repair, books and self-directed digital resources may constitute informal learning. Masterclasses, private tuition, guild workshops, structured online courses and instruction from an experienced maker are non-formal. The term self-taught often conceals these relationships and the many people, resources and settings through which capability was developed.

Research on British craft pottery demonstrates how formal, non-formal and informal learning operate together. Li, Holstein and Wedekind (2023) found that practitioners, workshops, associations, markets and education providers collectively formed a skills ecosystem capable of sustaining and reconstructing knowledge. Informal learning provided flexibility and continuity, while its increased importance also reflected the withdrawal of formal infrastructure.

Australia's Recognition of Prior Learning framework can assess skills acquired through training, work and life experience against a nationally recognised training product. Evidence may include work samples, training records and employer references (ASQA, n.d.). This mechanism is valuable where a relevant qualification and capable assessment provider exist. It cannot provide equivalent recognition where a specialist craft has no current training product, provider, assessor or agreed occupational standard.

The preceding QEST example demonstrates how capability developed through varied learning routes can become the basis for further structured development. Existing skill, professional experience and a body of work can be connected with short courses, bespoke training or one-to-one instruction appropriate to the practitioner's next stage.

Training route and skill level must be recorded separately. An uncredentialled practitioner may hold advanced knowledge. Recognition should be capable of documenting practice history, work samples, technical judgement, peer or employer verification and evidence of teaching or transmission. Australia requires mechanisms that can identify learning wherever it occurred, assess demonstrated capability against credible standards and connect practitioners with appropriate pathways for further development.

6.7 TRAINING INFRASTRUCTURE

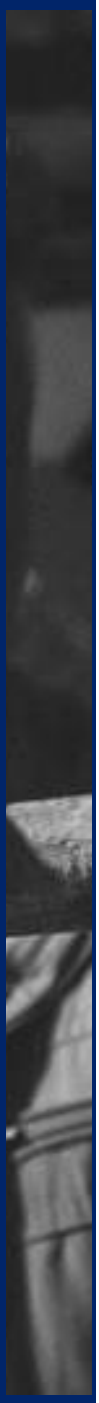
Craft training infrastructure comprises workshops, specialist equipment, materials, technical and teaching staff, active provider delivery and access to workplaces in which skills can be practised. The 2014 national mapping identified erosion across craft education and training, while Gattenhof and Saunders (2026) document continuing contraction across university and TAFE creative-arts provision. Broad program titles may remain after specialist studios close, teaching hours are reduced or technical staff are lost, allowing course data to overstate the practical capacity available to students.

This capacity is material-specific. Kilns, furnaces, looms, benches, tools and extraction systems require suitable premises, maintenance, consumables, safety procedures and practitioners able to teach their use. These resources are not readily interchangeable across disciplines. The loss of one component can make a qualification or pathway unavailable in practice even where it continues to exist administratively.

Switzerland sustains vocational education as a mainstream route after compulsory schooling. Approximately two-thirds of young people enter vocational education, choosing among about 250 federally recognised occupations and learning through dual apprenticeships or vocational schools (OECD, 2025c). This scale maintains a national network of employers, educators and occupational organisations able to renew training as industries change.

Switzerland ranked first in the Global Innovation Index for the fifteenth consecutive year in 2025, while the Swiss Government identifies vocational and professional education as part of the country's innovation capability (WIPO, 2025; SERI, 2022). The relevance to craft is structural: technical innovation depends upon workers who understand materials, production processes and quality as well as new equipment.

Australian training statistics require a material-field view of capacity. Monitoring facilities, equipment, technical and teaching staff, provider location, current delivery, employer participation and enrolment together would identify where pathways remain viable, where access is geographically restricted and where an occupation has lost the infrastructure through which its knowledge can continue.



6.8 CRAFT LEARNING IN SCHOOLS

Craft learning is present in the Australian Curriculum through Visual Arts and Design and Technologies. These subjects provide progressive opportunities to work with materials, tools, processes and designed outcomes across the school years (ACARA, 2022). Craft is distributed across established learning areas rather than organised as a separate national subject. Understanding its contribution to occupational pathways requires evidence of actual school provision, including specialist teachers, facilities, material disciplines and connections with further education and workplace learning.

Japan gives making a clearer curricular identity through the national elementary subject Art and Handicraft, Zuga Kōsaku. The subject develops expression, appreciation, shaping and making through sustained engagement with materials (MEXT, 2017). Its named place within the curriculum makes material learning visible to schools, teachers, students and later education systems.

German state curricula provide complementary mechanisms. Baden-Württemberg's primary subject Kunst/Werken combines art and making through textiles, tools and varied materials, while Technik provides a distinct practical and technical subject in lower-secondary education. Berlin and Brandenburg use Wirtschaft-Arbeit-Technik to connect technical activity with work and economic life (Ministerium für Kultus, Jugend und Sport Baden-Württemberg, 2016a, 2016b; Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Jugend und Familie Berlin and Ministerium für Bildung, Jugend und Sport des Landes Brandenburg, 2015).

Switzerland's Lehrplan 21 distinguishes Visual Design from Textile and Technical Design across the 21 German-speaking and multilingual cantons. Students make products, learn material properties and develop technical and design processes through a named curriculum field (Deutschschweizer Erziehungsdirektoren-Konferenz, 2016).

Craft learning in schools provides an early point of access to material knowledge, practical problem-solving and the experience of developing an idea through making. Its place in education warrants attention both as part of a broad education and as a foundation for further specialist learning. Assessing that foundation requires more than identifying curriculum content: it requires examining whether students have access to teachers, tools, materials, suitable facilities and sufficient time to develop their practice.

The international examples demonstrate different ways of giving this learning an identifiable curricular place. They provide reference points for examining Australian provision, without establishing that subject naming alone produces stronger outcomes. National mapping should connect curriculum expectations with actual delivery and progression into vocational education, university study and workplace learning. This would identify where material practices are sustained across educational stages and where students encounter gaps that restrict further development.

Making, Work & Technology

“Understanding how the economy, work, and technology shape one another is an essential part of general education. By designing and making products, students develop practical and technical capability while experiencing economic decisions firsthand. Internships and student-run enterprises deepen their understanding of working life, encourage initiative and entrepreneurship, and strengthen career orientation. These experiences also make expertise in skilled crafts and trades visible, enabling young people to make informed choices about consumption and future pathways, free from limiting stereotypes.”

—Anika Cichalla & Sinan Akyol
Landesinstitut Brandenburg für Schule und Lehrkräftebildung

Statement provided directly to the Australian Crafts Alliance for Mapping Australia’s Crafts Sector 2026.

6.9 GENDERED PATHWAYS INTO CRAFT AND TRADE

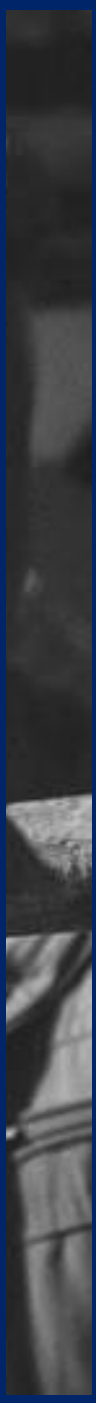
Australia has established apprenticeship, qualification and progression structures for many construction and industrial trades. The gap in Australia's craft skills pipeline does not arise because all forms of skilled making lack pathways. It arises where specialist material practices, including female-concentrated textile, clothing and studio practices, many of which operate through micro-enterprises, fall between trade, manufacturing, arts and small-business systems. Many tradespeople are craft-skilled workers. The gap lies between forms of embodied knowledge that have a recognised institutional home and those for which practitioners must assemble training, employment and progression across several systems.

Women represented 36.9 per cent of Australian apprenticeship commencements in the 12 months to 31 December 2023, but only 19.1 per cent of women commencing an apprenticeship entered a trade occupation (DEWR, 2025). More recent NCVER data show that female trade commencements declined overall in the 12 months to December 2025, although commencements increased in some male-dominated groups, including Electrotechnology and Telecommunications Trades Workers (NCVER, 2026a). This reflects occupational segregation within the apprenticeship system and limits the pool of women progressing into recognised industrial and construction trades. High female participation in textile, clothing and studio practices also requires examination of the availability of qualifications, employment protections and progression within each field. Both are consequences of how skilled occupations are classified and supported.

Classification shapes the pathways available for intervention. France defines 281 métiers d'art activities across 16 material domains through a ministerial order, giving occupations including lacemaking, embroidery, ceramics, glass, metal, wood and instrument making formal visibility in law (JORF, 2015). Female- and male-concentrated practices can be addressed within a common field of skilled occupations.

Germany's federally supported Girls'Day gives girls aged 10 and over practical experience of occupations and fields of study in which women are underrepresented. Around 15,000 events are offered annually, and more than 2.5 million girls have participated since the program began. Together with Germany's Klischeefrei initiative and Switzerland's National Future Career Day, it demonstrates how school exposure, career guidance, vocational training and employers can be coordinated to reduce gender stereotyping in occupational choice (Girls'Day, n.d.; Klischeefrei, 2021; Nationaler Zukunftstag, 2026).

Australian initiatives for women in trades remain concentrated in particular industries and jurisdictions. There is no national pathway framework spanning the craft occupations mapped in this report. A national craft classification, combined with the pathway audit proposed in Section 6.4, would allow school exposure, career guidance, apprenticeships and employer programs to address occupational segregation across the full material field and monitor entry, retention and progression.



6.10 ADVANCED MANUFACTURING SKILLS

Advanced manufacturing combines material knowledge with digital design, automation, sensing, data management and computer-controlled production. Craft practitioners increasingly work across this boundary, using digital tools to extend design and fabrication while relying on field-specific judgement to select materials, interpret variation, finish work and assess quality. Training systems must update occupations without separating established material practice from emerging technical capability. Because technologies and production systems can change faster than complete qualifications are replaced, this requires both updated national training products and continuing workplace learning.

Germany's Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training works with federal ministries, employers, unions and vocational experts to restructure recognised occupations as production changes. Between 2003 and 2012, 194 occupations were modernised or newly created (BIBB, 2013). This is an ongoing institutional function rather than a one-off reform. The training regulation for Bautechnischer Konstrukteur/Bautechnische Konstrukteurin, issued in September 2025 and effective from 1 August 2026, modernises and renames the former Bauzeichner/Bauzeichnerin occupation. It integrates established drawing and construction knowledge with Building Information Modelling, collaborative digital and analogue working methods, data processing, sustainability and circular-economy requirements. The recognised occupational pathway remains continuous while its title and technical content are renewed (BIBB, 2025).

Singapore consolidated its national skills and employment functions on 1 July 2026 through the establishment of the Skills and Workforce Development Agency, formed by merging SkillsFuture Singapore and Workforce Singapore. The new agency brings career guidance, training, job matching, employer workforce development and skills recognition within one system. Career Conversion Programmes provide employers with salary support of up to 90 per cent to reskill mid-career workers for growth roles across around 30 sectors through structured workplace training, attachments and job-redesign reskilling. Singapore's advanced-manufacturing ecosystem complements these workforce measures with shared facilities for Industry 5.0 learning, additive manufacturing, robotics and advanced remanufacturing. This connects occupational transition with the infrastructure through which new production systems can be learned and applied (SWDA, 2026a, 2026b).

Australia updates national training products through Jobs and Skills Councils, but responsibilities relevant to craft are divided among several bodies. Skills Insight covers textiles, clothing, footwear, timber and furnishing; Service and Creative Skills Australia covers fine art and ceramics; the Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance covers manufacturing, engineering and advanced manufacturing; and BuildSkills Australia covers construction and traditional building. Cross-cutting digital and information-technology capabilities also sit partly within the remit of the Future Skills Organisation. This allocation provides industry-specific stewardship, but not a single cross-material view of how established craft knowledge, digital fabrication and advanced production capability should develop together (DEWR, 2026a).

The national craft classification proposed in Section 6.9, combined with the craft-pathway audit proposed in Section 6.4, would provide that cross-material view. The mapping should record common technical requirements—including digital design, computer-controlled fabrication, automation, data and provenance systems, equipment maintenance, safety and circular production—alongside field-specific material practice and the shared infrastructure examined in Section 6.7. This would allow qualifications, continuing workplace learning and shared facilities to support technological change without eroding the material knowledge on which advanced manufacturing depends.

7

Threatened Skills and Sector Constraints

> “Skilled workers … don’t just appear overnight. They are developed over extended periods of time through apprenticeships and traineeships that combine training with real work undertaken in real workplaces.”

Australian Industry Group, 2026a



7.1 TRAINING INFRASTRUCTURE

The contraction of formal training relevant to craft has reduced the number of places in which advanced material skills can be learned. The abolition of the Education Investment Fund in 2019 redirected its remaining balance of almost $4 billion from education infrastructure to the Emergency Response Fund, while the Australian Education Union's (2020) national survey identified Creative Arts among the course areas most frequently affected by defunding (UA, 2019; AEU, 2020). At university level, 48 Creative Arts degrees were discontinued between 2018 and 2025, while TAFE NSW recorded a 45 per cent decrease in teachers between 2012 and 2022 (Gattenhof and Saunders, 2026; NSW Government, 2023).

These figures concern broad creative-arts provision and the overall TAFE workforce; they do not quantify losses within individual craft disciplines. Workshop-based learning in craft depends on trained teachers, specialist equipment, safe facilities and sufficient enrolments. Once a facility closes, the loss extends beyond a course place to the productive setting in which techniques can be demonstrated, practised and learned.

The vulnerability of this infrastructure was already visible in the 2014 national mapping, which treated training providers as part of the infrastructure of Australian craft and identified changes to education and training as requiring new approaches (Heath and Pascoe, 2014). The continuation of course closures and reductions in specialist provision more than a decade later indicates that training infrastructure remains a sector-level constraint rather than a series of isolated institutional changes (Gattenhof and Saunders, 2026).

Singapore provides a contrasting training-policy mechanism. Government expenditure on workforce skills training reached nearly S$1.2 billion in 2021, around 40 per cent above the S$0.8 billion spent in 2019. The SkillsFuture system combines individual access to continuing training with employer participation and wider workforce development (MOE Singapore, 2022). Australian craft training remains distributed across qualifications and portfolios without equivalent sector coordination.

Specialist workshops, equipment, technical and teaching staff and current delivery determine whether a pathway can operate in practice. A national account of craft training capacity needs to identify where these resources remain available, where access has contracted and where the infrastructure through which practical knowledge is transmitted has been lost (Heath and Pascoe, 2014; Gattenhof and Saunders, 2026).

Australia's craft training arrangements remain distributed across education, arts, manufacturing, construction and heritage systems. The resulting risk is not simply that fewer courses will be offered, but that Australia may lose the physical and human infrastructure through which particular forms of knowledge remain reproducible. A national craft-pathway audit should record facilities, specialist equipment, technical and teaching staff, active delivery, workplace supervisors, employer participation and geographical access alongside qualifications and enrolments. The objective is not merely to retain courses on a register, but to retain the conditions in which material capability can continue to be learned, exercised and transmitted.

7.2 WORKFORCE AGE AND TRANSMISSION

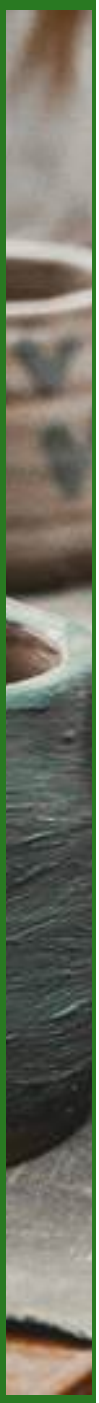
Workforce ageing shortens the period in which specialist knowledge can be passed to another generation. The National Manufacturing Strategy for Australian Fashion and Textiles 2026–2036 identifies a median age of 57 among skilled fashion and textile manufacturing workers and places skills transfer among the sector's workforce priorities. Its proposed Recognition of Prior Learning and Recognition of Current Competency pilots are intended to recognise technical expertise held within the existing workforce before experienced workers leave the industry (Australian Fashion Council and R.M.Williams, 2026).

The risk extends beyond fashion and textiles. The Manufacturing Workforce Plan 2024 identifies workforce ageing as one of four major challenges facing Australian manufacturing and describes the approaching retirement of specialised tradespeople and technicians as a "skills retirement cliff". Its proposed response centres on succession planning and mentoring, including knowledge transfer, flexible work arrangements and continued training, recognising that the time required to develop qualified workers affects the capacity to replenish specialist skills as experienced workers retire (MISA, 2024).

Older practitioners can remain part of the transmission system where work, teaching and assessment are designed around their experience. Across the OECD, the employment rate of people aged 55 to 64 increased from 47.7 per cent in 2004 to 66.4 per cent in 2024 (OECD, 2025b). Japan's Silver Human Resources Centres provide a specific institutional model for continued participation after retirement. In 2023, the network comprised 1,341 centres and 676,756 registered participants aged 60 and over, offering flexible work opportunities through locally administered centres with national coordination. Their activities include temporary, short-term and light work, employment placement and skills training (OECD, 2025a, p. 173, Box 4.22).

Australian employer evidence demonstrates that continued participation and knowledge retention are not the same measure. In the 2025 Australian HR Institute and Australian Human Rights Commission survey, 59 per cent of respondents agreed that older workers' departures had caused a loss of key skills or knowledge, while only 13 per cent reported that their organisation consistently captured that knowledge as older workers left employment (AHRI and AHRC, 2025). The transmission risk depends not only on the age of the workforce, but on whether knowledge is deliberately connected to successors through mentoring, supervised practice, assessment or other forms of workplace learning.

Age profiles can identify occupations exposed to retirement but do not show whether a senior practitioner has a successor, teaches within a workplace or holds a technique known by few others. Those relationships determine whether retirement produces ordinary workforce turnover or permanent capability loss. A national account of threatened skills must record the practitioners who hold advanced knowledge, whether that knowledge is being transmitted, and the conditions under which experienced practitioners can continue to work and teach.



7.3 ENDANGERED CRAFTS

Australia has a growing public infrastructure for rare and heritage crafts. Since 2014, the Lost Trades Fair has brought practitioners together to demonstrate and share skilled manual work, heritage trades, decorative arts and forgotten crafts. The Australian Centre for Rare Arts & Forgotten Trades, opened at Sovereign Hill in 2022, provides a more sustained teaching mechanism through workshops, masterclasses, events and residencies. In its first two years, nearly 70 artisans delivered 185 workshops and more than 1,600 hours of hands-on learning across textiles, decorative arts, metal, leather, heritage building trades, wood and fibre (Lost Trades, n.d.; Sovereign Hill Museums Association, 2026).

Public visibility and teaching activity do not, however, provide a national measure of viability. The United Kingdom's Heritage Crafts Red List assesses crafts through four categories of risk using practitioner and trainee numbers alongside evidence about training opportunities, markets and other conditions affecting future transmission. Its 2025 edition assessed 285 crafts through research that invited contributions from more than 900 organisations and individuals, identifying 72 as critically endangered, 93 as endangered and 115 as currently viable, with a further five classified as extinct in the United Kingdom (Heritage Crafts, 2025b).

Mould and deckle making demonstrates what this classification can identify. Heritage Crafts (n.d.-b) records no remaining professional practitioners, trainees or serious amateur makers in the United Kingdom. Ron Macdonald, the last known UK mould maker, died in 2017 after maintaining a practice that had originated in an established commercial workshop and continued independently after its closure. The craft survives elsewhere, but its disappearance from the United Kingdom shows that the loss of a technical field can be recorded as a specific change in national capability rather than inferred retrospectively from declining participation (Heritage Crafts, n.d.-b).

The Red List also links identification to intervention. Since 2019, the associated Endangered Crafts Fund has provided grants to practitioners for activities intended to increase the likelihood that endangered skills will survive into the next generation. Heritage Crafts (n.d.-a) reports that 79 grants have been awarded since the Fund's establishment in 2019, supporting activities such as skills transfer, specialist equipment, professional development and measures to improve craft viability. Risk classification provides an evidentiary basis for directing support towards the particular conditions threatening a craft's continuation.

Australian events, centres and teaching programs demonstrate that rare skills remain active, but they do not systematically establish how securely those skills can be transmitted. Practitioner numbers, workforce age, trainees and successors, access to training, material supply and continuing demand need to be considered together to distinguish a small but viable field from one approaching irreversible capability loss. A national endangered-crafts inventory would separate small but viable fields from those at risk, so that threatened knowledge can be identified while practitioners and transmission pathways still remain.



Wooden Boat Centre, Tasmania | Image: Wooden Boat Centre

CASE STUDY 07

TRADITIONAL WOODEN BOATBUILDING

WOODEN BOAT CENTRE

TRADITIONAL WOODEN BOATBUILDING AND SKILLS TRANSMISSION

FRANKLIN, TASMANIA

Traditional wooden boatbuilding depends on interconnected skills including lofting, timber selection, shaping, joinery, steam bending, planking, fastening, caulking and finishing. At Franklin in Tasmania's Huon Valley, the Wooden Boat Centre provides a working location in which these skills continue to be practised and transmitted. Its origins were themselves a response to skills loss. Founders John and Ruth Young had experienced difficulty finding shipwrights during the community construction of One and All in Adelaide and recognised that traditional shipwrighting knowledge was becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. After moving to Tasmania in the early 1990s, they brought experienced shipwrights out of retirement so that their knowledge could be learned and passed on. Those shipwrights had themselves learned from masters rather than through formal institutional training, and carried specialised knowledge of timber selection, material properties, hand tools and traditional construction methods.

When John and Ruth Young retired from the school, it continued under several management arrangements before being sold to a community not-for-profit incorporated association in October 2014. Today the Centre combines production, restoration, employment and teaching within the same workshop. Two full-time shipwrights supervise four employed apprentices, while the year-long wooden boatbuilding program accepts four students each year. Short courses ranging from one day to 10 weeks provide additional opportunities to learn particular skills, while volunteers support visitor interpretation, workshop activity and the restoration and repair of donated boats (Wooden Boat Centre Tasmania, n.d.). The Centre would also like to achieve formal accreditation for some units within its year-long program so that recognised certification can accompany at least part of the practical capability being taught, although training the apprentices has made this a lower priority.

That continuing activity does not necessarily mean the craft is secure. In a 2023 commentary, Melbourne wooden boat owner Mark Chew (2023) reported that the principals of six shipwright businesses were busy but seeking workers ranging from apprentices to experienced tradespeople. Chew expressly described his assessment as unscientific, so it should be treated as informal observation rather than a national workforce estimate. Nevertheless, it identifies a central tension: demand for skilled work can coexist with shortages of people able to undertake it (Chew, 2023).

The United Kingdom provides a useful methodological comparison. Following industry consultation and a 2023 survey receiving 90 responses, Heritage Crafts (2025a) estimated that the UK had between 21 and 50 people earning their principal income from traditional wooden boatbuilding, another 50 to 100 earning supplementary income from it, and more than 50 trainees. Despite this activity, the craft was classified as endangered because of workforce age, restricted training access, loss of regional forms, material costs, declining boatyards and difficulties recruiting and retaining skilled workers (Heritage Crafts, 2025a).

Available public evidence does not provide an equivalent national survey or register of Australian traditional wooden boatbuilders. The Wooden Boat Centre consequently demonstrates that the capability survives and that an organised mechanism for transmitting it exists. The Centre has tracked some former students, a number of whom have started their own boatbuilding businesses locally, but, as a small not-for-profit, has limited capacity for systematic longitudinal tracking. The case illustrates both the persistence of the craft and the consequences of Australia's present evidence gap: training and practice can be observed, but national workforce viability and longer-term training outcomes cannot yet be measured.





John Patterson and Sarah Mantel with Percy, built in Huon pine at the Wooden Boat Centre, 2025 | Image: Wooden Boat Centre

“Those shipwrights had learned from their master, not any TAFE, and each of them had a different way of working. They could go out to a forest and pick the tree that had the perfect bend to suit particular boat structures, and the perfect density for what was needed.”

—Peter Shimeld, guide, Wooden Boat Centre
Statement provided directly to the Australian Crafts Alliance for Mapping Australia’s Crafts Sector 2026.

7.4 BUILT HERITAGE SKILLS

Australia's ageing built environment creates continuing demand for specialist stone, timber, metal, plaster, glass and roofing skills. The New South Wales Minister's Stonework Program, established in 1991, coordinates conservation across a government portfolio of more than 800 heritage-significant sandstone buildings and structures (NSW Public Works, 2026). Delivered through Heritage Stoneworks, the program combines conservation work with traditional-trades development, including apprenticeships and career pathways intended to sustain the skilled workforce required to maintain these assets (NSW Public Works, 2026).

The vulnerability of this workforce has been identified nationally. The Heritage Trades and Professional Training Project, commissioned by Heritage Victoria on behalf of the Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand, audited heritage-trades training and undertook a skills-needs analysis across Australia and New Zealand. It identified looming shortages in specialist heritage skills and the need to connect training provision more closely with the practical requirements of historic-building conservation (Heritage Victoria, 2010).

International systems connect heritage protection more explicitly with the transmission of specialist skills. France's Compagnons du Devoir combines workplace training with occupational mobility and advanced progression in trades including carpentry, stonemasonry and roofing. The restoration of Notre-Dame after the 2019 fire demonstrates the continuing demand for these capabilities, mobilising carpenters, roofers, stonemasons, joiners, metalworkers and other specialist crafts in the reconstruction of the cathedral (Compagnons du Devoir et du Tour de France, 2010; French Ministry of Culture, 2024).

In England, Historic England identifies heritage-specific qualifications and training pathways for craftspeople working on traditional buildings (Historic England, 2025). Japan goes further by recognising selected conservation techniques within its cultural-property system. Traditional skills considered essential to the conservation of cultural property can be formally selected, with holders and preservation groups recognised and supported to train successors, refine techniques and document knowledge (Historic England, 2025; Agency for Cultural Affairs Japan, 2025).



These arrangements differ in legal and institutional form, but each treats specialist labour as part of the capacity required to protect heritage. The 2026 NSW Heritage Strategy now similarly commits to supporting heritage-trades training initiatives so that conservation skills remain available, indicating growing recognition that protection of an asset also depends on the workforce capable of maintaining it (NSW Government, 2026). Australian heritage registers and asset-management systems nevertheless record buildings and conservation works more consistently than the practitioners, teaching relationships and material supply chains required to sustain them. Built heritage capability needs to be measured alongside the assets that depend upon it.



7.5 SKILLS ECOSYSTEMS

Craft capability depends on an ecosystem of training, employment, tools, materials, workshops and markets. Li, Holstein and Wedekind's (2023) study of the British ceramics industry traced the decline of apprenticeships alongside outsourcing, industrial consolidation and the hollowing out of the regional production base. The loss of firms reduced both production and the workplaces in which specialist knowledge had been learned and transmitted (Li, Holstein and Wedekind, 2023). Industrial pottery is now classified as critically endangered by Heritage Crafts, with mouldmaking among the specialist skills affected by declining training opportunities, outsourcing and the reduced capacity of experienced practitioners to train successors (Heritage Crafts, 2025b).

The same relationships are visible in Australia. A course cannot sustain advanced practice without teachers and equipment; an apprentice cannot complete training without a viable workplace; and a workshop cannot retain skilled staff without sufficient demand. Classification by occupation, qualification or course enrolment separates these dependencies and can make the deterioration of a productive system appear as a series of unrelated shortages.

Recent Australian skills evidence reinforces the importance of the workplace within this relationship. Australian Industry Group (2026b) has argued that education, training and employment need to be more strongly connected, noting that workplace learning has become less prominent within VET policy and funding settings while recent reforms have concentrated more heavily on institution-based delivery. Its analysis emphasises whether skills are current, valued and used in workplaces rather than training volume alone (Ai Group, 2026b).

Austria's Regional Centres for Craftsmanship, selected for UNESCO's (2016) Register of Good Safeguarding Practices in 2016, provide one institutional response. The three centres are governed by local craftspeople in cooperation with craft businesses, educational and scientific institutions, and provide training ranging from school programs and short courses to apprenticeships and postgraduate study. They also undertake documentation, research, promotion and cooperation across cultural and economic fields.

The Australian Crafts Alliance has established a national Centres for Craftsmanship framework informed by this approach. The model recognises existing working sites, including studios, guild spaces, workshops and community organisations, where craft is regularly practised and taught, rather than requiring the construction of new facilities. Its minimum functions centre on recurring teaching, transmission, documentation and public accessibility, with participating sites connected through a national network (ACA, 2026a). Sustaining such a network as skills infrastructure requires continuing capacity for teaching, coordination, equipment and workshop access. The relevant policy question is not only whether individual courses or practitioners remain, but whether the relationships among training, workplaces, materials, production and demand are sufficiently supported to reproduce capability.

7.6 POLICY LOCATION

Dedicated Commonwealth support for contemporary visual arts and craft has been administered through the arts portfolio. The Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, introduced in 2003, was replaced in 2025 by the Visual Art, Craft and Design Partnership Framework 2025–2028. The Framework supports living visual artists, craft and design practitioners and the organisations that support their practice, with investment directed towards new work, organisational sustainability, audiences, exhibitions and national and international presentation (Creative Australia, n.d.-b). The Framework's focus is studio practice, exhibition and contemporary cultural work.

The wider craft workforce also sits within manufacturing, construction, food production, repair, heritage and vocational education. Arts participation measures do not record workshop capacity, supply-chain position, export readiness, apprenticeships or the availability of specialist trades. Industry and occupational statistics record parts of this activity but do not connect them to the knowledge and transmission that define craft capability.

Australia's planned association with Horizon Europe provides a current example of policy architecture designed around capabilities that cross conventional portfolio boundaries. From 1 January 2027, Australian entities will be able to apply to eligible Pillar II funding calls under transitional arrangements while the association treaty processes are completed (DISR, 2026a). Pillar II's clusters encompass Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society; Digital, Industry and Space; Climate, Energy and Mobility; and Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment. Australian implementation planning explicitly includes industry, SMEs, not-for-profits, industry bodies and peak organisations alongside universities and research institutions, with regional participation and alignment with wider national priorities included among the proposed measures of success (DISR, 2026a, 2026b).

The direction extends beyond the 2027 program. The European Commission's (2025c) proposed Horizon Europe framework for 2028–2034 places competitiveness and society within a common pillar and separately identifies innovation ecosystems and research and technology infrastructures. Its proposed priorities connect industrial competitiveness, clean transition, bioeconomy, digital capability, resilience and societal challenges rather than treating research, production and social outcomes as isolated domains (European Commission, 2025a, 2025c). The proposal also identifies support for research and technology infrastructure and stronger innovation ecosystems as mechanisms for increasing research and innovation capability.

A governance gap remains across Australian craft policy settings. Cultural practice, training, manufacturing, heritage, research and innovation, regional development and trade are supported through separate systems, while no single policy account follows the productive relationships among them. Sector recognition would allow these functions to retain their distinct purposes while working from a shared account of practice, labour, transmission, production and provenance. Such an evidence base would make cross-sector capability visible to domestic policy and to international research, innovation and industrial collaboration without reducing craft to either an arts activity or a manufacturing category.





7.7 FUNDING TIMEFRAMES

Advanced craft skill develops over periods longer than standard project funding. Japan's Dentō Kōgeishi system requires a practitioner to have at least 12 years of practical experience in the production region of a designated traditional craft before undertaking practical, knowledge and interview examinations for recognition as a Traditional Craftsperson (Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries, 2024). By comparison, Creative Australia's (n.d.-a) current Arts Projects programs support activities lasting no longer than two years.

The Japanese system also locates recognition within continuing institutional arrangements for skill transmission. The Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries undertakes practitioner recognition, successor development, education and industry-promotion activities, supported principally through funding from Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. The mechanism connects the long period required to acquire expertise with an institution responsible for maintaining the conditions in which traditional production and transmission continue (Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries, n.d.).

Research on cultural-sector funding identifies a corresponding problem at organisational level. Ashton (2023) describes the prevalence of projectification and "portfolio precarity", in which cultural organisations continually move among funding sources, application processes and project timelines while attempting to maintain their underlying activity. Daughtry and Whiting's (2025) analysis of Australian cultural funding similarly identifies the limitations of project-based grants where funding meets discrete project costs more readily than the continuing time, labour and resources required for cultural production.

Longer-term organisational funding provides a different mechanism. Creative Australia's (2026) Four Year Investment for Organisations is explicitly intended to give arts and cultural organisations greater certainty for planning and to increase their capacity to develop other investment and collaborations over time. For craft, sustained organisational funding can keep workshops, equipment, teaching relationships and administrative capability in place between projects, reducing the need to rebuild those conditions for each funding round.

Transmission requires stable access to experienced practitioners, workshops, equipment and materials over the period in which competence develops. Funding settings need not reproduce the duration of a craft career, but they need to support institutions capable of maintaining these conditions beyond a single project. Measures based only on projects delivered, participants reached or activities completed cannot establish whether the underlying teaching and productive capability remains available when the funding period ends.

8

Craft and Place.

“Crafts are the fruit of tradition, innovation and imagination. Whether they take the form of pottery, woodwork, basketwork, weaving, metalwork, glasswork or leatherwork, they are all a fundamental expression of cultural identity. For UNESCO, crafts are also an important tool in sustainable development.”

Étienne-Nugue, 2009
Tell Me About… Crafts, UNESCO Publishing



8.1 PLACE-BASED PRODUCTION

Place-based craft develops through repeated relationships among materials, practitioners, production methods and local demand. A product may carry the identity of a region because its raw material comes from there, because a specialised community of makers works there, or because techniques have been developed and adapted over time to local materials, conditions and uses. These relationships give provenance economic and cultural meaning by connecting the finished product to the productive circumstances through which its regional identity has formed.

Region of origin can function as a quality signal and influence willingness to pay where the underlying claim is recognised and trusted. Loureiro and McCluskey's (2000) study of protected geographical identification found a price premium for geographically identified Galician veal within particular quality levels, demonstrating that origin can carry market value when it operates alongside credible product characteristics. The European Commission (2020) study reports the same relationship between verified origin and market value across protected European wines, spirit drinks and agricultural products and foodstuffs, and the European craft and industrial regime now extends protected names to craft products (EUIPO, 2026c).

Place-based production is consequently more specific than production simply occurring within a region. Under the European craft and industrial geographical-indication regime, a qualifying product must originate in a defined place, possess a quality, reputation or other characteristic essentially attributable to that geographical origin, and have at least one relevant production step occur there. Product specifications identify the production stages, methods and, where relevant, raw materials through which that relationship is demonstrated (European Union, 2023). The Regulation expressly recognises that both human and natural factors can give a production stage its geographical significance.

Porcelaine de Limoges provides the first operational example under the new European system. Announced on 18 May 2026, it became the first name protected under the European Union's craft and industrial geographical-indication regime (European Commission, 2026c; EUIPO, 2026b). The registration recognises a relationship between Limoges porcelain, its geographical origin and more than two centuries of specialised know-how in Haute-Vienne. In this case, the production process takes place entirely within the defined geographical area, including the shaping and decorative techniques associated with the product (EUIPO, 2026b).

Australian statistics can identify where businesses and workers are located. The relevant evidence for place-based production is whether particular materials, production stages, accumulated knowledge or reputation depend upon the region and how those relationships are maintained across producers and over time. Recording material origin, consequential production stages, production methods and the basis of a product's regional reputation would allow geographic concentration to be distinguished from a demonstrable relationship between product and place. Recording these relationships provides evidence for assessing collective-origin claims and preparing applications for protection.

8.2 PRODUCER-GROUP GOVERNANCE

The European craft and industrial geographical-indication regime places producer groups at the centre of collective origin protection. Regulation (EU) 2023/2411 defines a producer group as an association, irrespective of legal form, mainly composed of producers working with the same product, and provides for applications to be submitted through such groups. The application must establish the geographical area, product characteristics, relevant production steps and connection to place, converting evidence held across individual enterprises into a collective product specification (European Union, 2023).

The producer group remains responsible after registration. It must operate transparently, openly and without discrimination and allow producers of the protected product to join. Its functions may include preparing and amending the specification, organising internal compliance checks, protecting the geographical indication against misuse, undertaking collective marketing, providing advice and training, monitoring product performance and supporting enforcement (European Union, 2023). Collective recognition depends on continuing governance as well as the evidence assembled at the point of application.

This structure is significant for Australian craft, where many regional fields consist of sole traders, family firms and small manufacturers. Individual businesses may hold detailed knowledge of their own materials, production methods and histories without possessing the authority to define a regional name or production standard for other producers. Collective institutions provide a mechanism through which evidence can be assembled, boundaries negotiated, common specifications agreed and compliance maintained while production remains distributed among independent enterprises (Heath and Pascoe, 2014; Luckman and Andrew, 2020).

Design & Crafts Council Ireland provides a national example of how dispersed craft organisations can be connected without displacing local representation. DCCI's (n.d.-b) shareholder structure is organised through Guilds, Associations, Networks and Societies representing regional and discipline-based craft communities. These organisations participate in collective meetings, inform sector strategy and hold voting rights at the Council's Annual General Meeting, while local and discipline-specific groups remain independently constituted (DCCI, n.d.-b). The arrangement gives small and geographically dispersed enterprises a recognised route into national sector governance.

Producer-group governance is part of the infrastructure of place-based production. It supports the preparation and maintenance of a common specification, compliance among group members and protection of the registered name. Under the European regime, entitlement to use that name rests on product compliance with the specification and the applicable verification requirements, rather than membership alone (European Union, 2023, arts 45, 47, 50–52). Australian regional mapping can identify concentrations of practitioners and enterprises, but collective origin requires an additional institutional capacity through which producers can define, maintain and verify the relationships they hold in common.





8.3 REGIONAL CRAFT INSTITUTIONS

Regional craft institutions bring together facilities, practitioners, teaching, enterprise and public engagement within a defined place. They connect activities that are otherwise distributed across individual workshops, training providers, businesses and community organisations. Where those relationships are maintained over time, a regional institution can hold knowledge about local practitioners, materials, equipment, production capability and markets that is not visible through occupational or business statistics alone.

Austria's Regional Centres for Craftsmanship provide an established example. Entered on UNESCO's (2016) Register of Good Safeguarding Practices in 2016, the centres are run by local craftspeople working with craft businesses, educational institutions, artists and other regional organisations. Their activities include teaching, exhibitions, documentation, research, cooperation with schools and universities, and support for continuing craft practice. UNESCO's recognition reflects the capacity of these locally governed institutions to connect cultural safeguarding with the social and productive relationships through which craft remains active (UNESCO, 2016).

Research on regional craft enterprise supports this collective function. Dodd et al.'s (2021) study of craft brewing examined how locally embedded enterprises create and share economic, social, cultural and knowledge resources through collaboration rather than operating only as isolated firms. The study found that such resources can be created, stewarded and reinvested collectively in ways that support both community continuity and sectoral development (Dodd et al., 2021). Regional craft capability more widely depends partly on institutions and networks able to retain knowledge, relationships and productive resources within the place in which enterprises operate.

Australia already contains many of the institutional components required for this function. Public workshops, specialist museums, regional art centres, guild facilities, TAFE workshops, community organisations and production hubs operate across different systems and funding arrangements. Earlier Australian mapping identified infrastructure, training, market access and organisational capacity as interconnected elements of the craft ecology rather than independent concerns (Heath and Pascoe, 2014). Their regional knowledge can identify practitioners, specialist equipment, teaching capacity, threatened skills, material suppliers and production relationships that cannot be reconstructed reliably from a central statistical register alone.

A regional institution can support both safeguarding and enterprise where it remains connected to working production. Its contribution may include maintaining access to specialist facilities, enabling teaching and mentoring, connecting producers and training organisations, supporting market development and documenting local capability. National coordination need not replace these institutions or impose a uniform organisational form. Coordination can connect regional knowledge into a wider evidence system while allowing the relationships among practice, production, materials, skills and place to remain locally grounded.



Weaving workshop, Ballarat | Image: Australian Centre for Rare Arts & Forgotten Trades

CASE STUDY 08

THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR RARE ARTS & FORGOTTEN TRADES

Australian Centre for Rare Arts & Forgotten Trades Ballarat, Victoria—purpose-built craft teaching and regional cultural infrastructure

The Australian Centre for Rare Arts & Forgotten Trades opened at Sovereign Hill on Wadawurrung Country in November 2022. Operated by the not-for-profit Sovereign Hill Museums Association, it was established within a $3.7 million redevelopment of the former Gold Museum, supported through Australian Government funding. The purpose-built facility contains dedicated metalwork, woodwork, leatherwork, decorative arts and textile spaces, enabling crafts requiring specialist tools, machinery, ventilation and safety systems to be taught within one institution (Davis, 2022; Sovereign Hill Museums Association, 2026).

The Centre delivers workshops, masterclasses, events and residencies led by practising artisans. Its program has included silversmithing, blacksmithing, knifemaking, locksmithing, armour making, basketry, stained glass, shoemaking, leatherwork, chairmaking, weaving, pattern drafting, calligraphy and ceramics. Sovereign Hill reports that, in its first two years, the Centre hosted 185 workshops led by nearly 70 artisans, providing more than 1,600 hours of hands-on learning (Sovereign Hill Museums Association, 2026). Wadawurrung artist Tammy Gilson has also taught weaving using locally sourced materials, with the cultural knowledge and authority remaining with its Wadawurrung practitioners.

The Centre operates within a wider regional commitment to craft. Ballarat was admitted to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network as a Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art in 2019. The designation belongs to the City of Ballarat, while the Centre is operated by the Sovereign Hill Museums Association; they are complementary rather than the same initiative. Their work has intersected through activities including Craft Lab and Ballarat's hosting of the UNESCO Crafts and Folk Art subnetwork meeting at the Centre in 2024 (City of Ballarat, 2024).

The Centre demonstrates that a regional institution can bring otherwise dispersed craftspeople, specialist equipment, practical teaching and public participation together in one place. It connects skills transmission with cultural tourism and gives practising artisans a paid and visible teaching platform. In this respect, it provides an existing Australian precedent for the Centres for Craftsmanship model proposed in Recommendation Thirteen, although it was not established as part of a national system.



The Centre provides a strong existing foundation for a more sustained Australian model of craft development, transmission and regional capability. With adequate recurrent investment, its purpose-built workshops, practising artisan network and established teaching program could support longer-term pathways extending from introductory participation through specialist training, mentorship, apprenticeship, professional practice and enterprise development. A structured practitioner network, continuing evaluation and links to provenance and endangered-craft monitoring could further strengthen that role without changing the Centre's distinctive place-based character. In this respect, the Centre offers Australia an important regional counterpart to models such as QEST in the United Kingdom: not by reproducing QEST's organisational form, but by demonstrating how sustained investment in practitioners, advanced learning and transmission can build enduring craft capability. As a model for regional communities, it shows how specialist infrastructure, skilled practitioners, cultural tourism, education and local identity can be brought together within one institution and connected to a wider national system.



8.4 CULTURAL TOURISM

Craft tourism connects visitors with production as well as finished objects. Workshops, studios, trails, markets and demonstrations can make the material and social relationships behind regional products accessible to visitors. In qualitative research conducted in Jinan, China, Duan et al. (2023) examined how traditional craft souvenirs acquire meaning through relationships among people, craft and place. The findings support attention to those relationships in tourism development, while their application to Australian regions requires local evidence.

The economic relationship is wider than the purchase of a finished object. A visitor may encounter the workshop in which production occurs, observe specialist processes, participate in making, purchase directly from practitioners and learn why particular materials or techniques belong to the region. These activities can connect tourism expenditure with production, interpretation and the transmission of knowledge while creating a market in which the circumstances of making remain visible.

The Council of Europe's (n.d.) European Route of Ceramics provides an institutional example. Certified as a Cultural Route in 2012, it connects ceramic-producing territories through their material heritage, industrial histories and continuing know-how. Participating destinations provide access to museums and collections alongside workshops, behind-the-scenes production and hands-on making experiences. The route treats ceramic heritage as both tangible objects and the living knowledge required for their production, linking regional identity with active craft practice rather than heritage display alone (Council of Europe, n.d.).

Australian tourism statistics demonstrate the scale of visitor expenditure while also showing the limits of existing categories for identifying craft production. In 2024–25, the Tourism Satellite Account recorded $20.8 billion in visitor consumption under the combined category of "shopping, gifts and souvenirs" and a further $9.3 billion in recreational, cultural and gambling services (ABS, 2025a). These measures identify economic activity generated by visitors but do not distinguish practitioner-made products from other retail goods or identify whether expenditure supports working studios, demonstrations, teaching or the transmission of specialist knowledge.

Regional cultural-tourism measurement needs to distinguish the presentation of craft imagery from access to active production. Recording working workshops and studios, practitioner participation, demonstrations and teaching, direct sales and the relationship of the experience to local materials and production would make visible the labour and capability sustaining the visitor experience. Cultural tourism can then be understood not only as consumption of regional identity, but as one of the markets through which place-based craft production remains economically active.

8.5 SHARED PRODUCTION FACILITIES

Shared production facilities reduce the capital barrier facing practices that require kilns, furnaces, looms, extraction systems, food-grade equipment, digital fabrication or heavy machinery. They can concentrate specialist equipment, technical knowledge and maintenance within one operating environment while providing access to practitioners and small enterprises that could not justify the same infrastructure independently. Their economic function is not simply the provision of workspace, but the retention of productive capability that would otherwise be fragmented across individual businesses.

The Australian Fashion Council's (2026) Clothing Smart Factory feasibility study applies this principle to fashion and textile manufacturing. The proposed facility is intended to provide brands and manufacturers with access to digital design, textile printing, computer-controlled cutting, automated production and advanced finishing for research, sampling and small-run onshore production. The study examines how shared machinery, workforce development and production support could reduce capital and minimum-volume barriers for smaller enterprises (Australian Fashion Council, 2026).

An operational Australian precedent is provided by Stage 1 of the Advanced Manufacturing Readiness Facility at Bradfield City Centre in Western Sydney, housed in the First Building opened on 5 March 2025 (NSW Government, 2025a). Its glass-walled manufacturing hall began receiving advanced machinery in early 2025, and the facility has agreed a partnership with 11 universities across New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory (NSW Government, 2025a, 2025b). The arrangement illustrates how infrastructure that would be costly for individual firms to acquire can operate as a shared regional capability.

The same institutional logic is increasingly recognised within European research and innovation policy. The European Commission (2025a) defines technology infrastructures as facilities, equipment, capabilities and resources used to develop, test, upscale and validate technologies, including pilot lines, pilot plants, testbeds and demonstration facilities. They partly reduce the need for companies to maintain specialised equipment in-house while giving firms access to technical expertise and pathways towards commercial production. The 2025 European Strategy on Research and Technology Infrastructures places wider access to these facilities within Europe's approach to industrial competitiveness and innovation capability (European Commission, 2025a).

Infrastructure alone does not constitute a productive craft ecology. Its value depends on skilled technical staff, maintenance, affordable and appropriate access, relationships with practitioners and enterprises, and pathways through which testing and learning can progress into continuing production. Australian industry classifications generally record facility operators and the enterprises using them as separate activities. Identifying shared facilities alongside their equipment, technical capability, users and surrounding production networks would show where infrastructure supports several connected practices and where its loss would remove capability from a regional production system.





8.6 REGIONAL RESILIENCE

Regional economic resilience depends on the capacity of a place to absorb disruption, adapt its productive activity and retain pathways into continuing employment and enterprise. For craft-based economies, this capacity can be distributed across sole traders, family businesses, specialist manufacturers, suppliers, repairers, training providers and shared facilities. Resilience draws on enterprise diversity and complementary capabilities through which materials can continue to be processed, products made and repaired, knowledge transmitted and new markets developed.

OECD research shows that geographically concentrated manufacturing activity can expose regional labour markets to trade and technological shocks. Rusticelli et al. (2018) point to local workforce capability and innovation as part of the response. Vermeulen (2022) similarly examines policies for people, firms and places as connected components of economic resilience, noting that additional capacity in production or infrastructure can improve resilience and, in some circumstances, longer-term productivity.

Australian policy increasingly applies a comparable capability-based approach. The Future Made in Australia National Interest Framework defines economic resilience partly through the domestic capacity to prevent, absorb, adapt to or transform production in response to disruption. Its assessment framework considers concentration of supply, vulnerability to disruption, alternative suppliers and the capacity to alter production processes, supported by supply-chain mapping and industry evidence (Treasury, 2024). This approach assesses a production system's capacity to keep functioning when conditions change, alongside its current economic activity.

For regional craft and manufacturing, resilience depends on retaining sufficient connected capability to keep productive options open. Where a production system depends on a single specialist processor, facility or experienced practitioner, its vulnerability may be greater than enterprise counts suggest. Loss of an intermediate stage can interrupt production and remove a workplace in which associated knowledge is exercised and transmitted. Regional mapping should examine these dependencies, including the availability of alternative processors, suppliers, repair services and training arrangements.

Enterprise counts and employment totals cannot measure these relationships on their own. A regional account of productive resilience needs to identify critical facilities and skills, concentration at particular production stages, available alternative suppliers and processors, transmission capacity, access to shared infrastructure and the range of markets supporting continuing production. This would distinguish a region containing craft businesses from a region retaining the productive relationships required to adapt, recover and continue making when economic or supply conditions change.

9

People, Place and Cultural Heritage

“Passing on craft knowledge requires a space where it can become tangible and palpable. Craftsmanship is far more than the technical production of a product; it is about experience, the exchange of knowledge, learning from one another, and fostering a community of all those interested in the craft. A physical location creates identity and lends weight to a subject. It has an internal impact, strengthening the community of practitioners, but it also serves a vital external function. By anchoring the subject in a region traditionally linked to textile craftsmanship, the Textile Center Haslach acts as a bridge between the roots of the past and a potential future. In this way, the center gives the region direction; the subject matter provides a sense of grounding while simultaneously attracting many international visitors to the town.”

Christina Leitner, 2026
Scientific Director, Textiles Zentrum Haslach, Austria
Statement provided directly to the Australian Crafts Alliance for Mapping Australia’s Crafts Sector 2026



9.1 KNOWLEDGE TRANSMISSION

Craft knowledge carries more than the technical capacity to reproduce a process. Within living cultural heritage, transmission can also carry the meanings through which a practice is understood by the people who maintain it: relationships to place and materials, terminology, standards of judgement, histories, social responsibilities and ways of understanding when and why particular work is undertaken. UNESCO's (2003) definition of intangible cultural heritage accordingly describes knowledge and skills as being transmitted between generations while continually recreated by communities in response to their environment, interaction with nature and history, contributing to a sense of identity and continuity.

Continuity therefore involves adaptation as well as retention of technique. The Convention describes intangible cultural heritage as transmitted between generations and continually recreated by communities in response to their environment and history (UNESCO, 2003, art. 2.1).

Purnama and Artika (2026) provide a craft-specific example in their study of the stone-carving community of Muntilan. Its family and community learning practices integrate technical skill with aesthetic sensitivity, spiritual values and Javanese philosophy, locating learning within the social and cultural life of the community rather than treating craftsmanship as an isolated technical competency. The study also describes adaptation to innovation while core cultural principles remain intact, demonstrating how transmission can sustain continuity without requiring practice to remain static.

The relationships through which knowledge is transmitted also shape authority. Family workshops, occupational trades, community organisations and culturally governed practices do not necessarily assign the same rights to teach, reproduce, document or disclose knowledge. Recognition of a practitioner's capability does not by itself establish an unrestricted right to transmit every part of a practice. For First Nations craft, authority over access, teaching, documentation and use remains with the relevant knowledge holders and communities.

A cultural-heritage account of craft requires evidence of the relationships through which knowledge remains continuous: recognised knowledge holders and teachers, the places and communities in which practice occurs, modes of transmission, successor relationships and the cultural authority governing access where relevant. These attributes extend beyond participation or occupational status. They make it possible to record whether a living practice retains both the people capable of carrying it forward and the social and cultural relationships through which its meaning continues.

9.2 FIRST NATIONS AUTHORITY AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

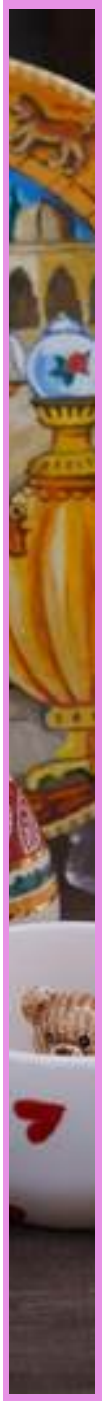
First Nations craft practice is constituted through relationships among knowledge holders, Country, kinship, language, materials and cultural authority. Maker identity and cultural authority are related but not interchangeable: identifying who made an object does not by itself establish who may authorise the use, teaching, reproduction or commercialisation of particular knowledge, designs or cultural expressions. Cultural laws, community protocols and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) principles guide authority, consent, attribution, benefit sharing and culturally appropriate access. Provenance concerning First Nations practice must be capable of recording the relevant authority and permissions while restricting access to information that is sacred, gendered, seasonal or otherwise culturally protected.

Australian copyright, design, trade mark and consumer law protect particular interests in authorship, branding and misleading representation, but they do not provide comprehensive recognition of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property. Current practice also relies on contracts, ICIP clauses, protocols, notices and other mechanisms intended to recognise rights and responsibilities that existing law does not automatically protect (Reconciliation Australia and Terri Janke and Company, 2025). The Australian Government has committed $13.4 million over four years to developing stand-alone protection for First Nations traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, including responses to fake art, merchandise and souvenirs. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Expert Working Group is informing this work as legislative options are developed through a First Nations-led process (Office for the Arts, n.d.).

The economic and cultural consequences of inadequate protection are measurable. The Productivity Commission (2022) estimated that sales across the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual arts and crafts market reached at least $250 million in 2019–20, including sales of inauthentic products. It also estimated that around two-thirds of Indigenous-style souvenirs were made without Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander involvement (Productivity Commission, 2022). It identified economic harm alongside the unauthorised use and misrepresentation of cultural material and recommended stronger cultural-rights protection, improved consumer information and continuing support for the sector (Productivity Commission, 2022).

Existing sector mechanisms provide part of the required infrastructure. Community-controlled art centres and dealers use catalogue records, provenance information and certificates of authenticity to identify artists and works, while the Indigenous Art Code provides a voluntary framework for fair, transparent and ethical dealing. The Code is not itself an authenticity mark, but its requirements can create documentary connections among the artist, artwork, place of creation and dealer responsibility (Indigenous Art Code, 2025). Creative Australia's (n.d.-c) protocols for using First Nations cultural and intellectual property in the arts provide a further framework for consent, attribution, cultural authority and appropriate use (Creative Australia, n.d.-c).

Australia has also previously attempted national certification. The National Indigenous Arts Advocacy Association's Label of Authenticity scheme operated from 1999 to 2003 using an authenticity mark and a collaboration mark under the trade mark system. Parliamentary review recorded limited uptake together with administrative and governance difficulties before the scheme went into abeyance (Commonwealth of Australia, 2007; Rimmer, 2004). Its history demonstrates that verification cannot rest on a mark alone. A durable system requires representative First Nations governance, culturally appropriate rules for authority and access, reliable administration and verification that distinguishes maker attribution, cultural authority, product authenticity and ethical trade.



“The misleading conduct has the potential to undermine the integrity of the industry and reduce opportunities for Australian Aboriginal peoples.”

—Sarah Court, ACCC Commissioner, 2019

CASE STUDY 09

BIRUBI ART

BIRUBI ART

SOUVENIR WHOLESALING AND MISLEADING ORIGIN REPRESENTATIONS: FEDERAL COURT JUDGMENTS, 2018–2019

KIPPA-RING, QUEENSLAND

Between July 2015 and November 2017, Birubi Art Pty Ltd supplied almost 50,000 boomerangs, bullroarers, didgeridoos and message stones to retailers across Australia. The products were manufactured in Indonesia but carried designs and wording associated with Aboriginal Australian art, including representations such as “Authentic Aboriginal Art”, “Hand Painted” and “Australia”. Their presentation created the impression that they had been made or painted in Australia by Aboriginal people (ACCC, 2019).

In October 2018, the Federal Court found that Birubi had made false or misleading representations in contravention of the Australian Consumer Law: Australian Competition and Consumer Commission v Birubi Art Pty Ltd [2018] FCA 1595. In June 2019, the Court ordered the company, then in liquidation, to pay pecuniary penalties totalling $2.3 million and the ACCC’s costs: Australian Competition and Consumer Commission v Birubi Art Pty Ltd (in liq) (No 3) [2019] FCA 996. In determining the penalty, the Court recognised that misrepresenting the provenance of Indigenous art and artefacts could produce economic, social and cultural harm extending beyond the immediate deception of individual consumers.

The case establishes that claims about who made a craft product, where it was made and how it was produced are legally consequential representations rather than incidental marketing language. Australian Consumer Law can be used where a business falsely represents a product’s origin, history, maker or method of production. The case provides direct legal support for treating maker identity and geographic origin as information that should be documented and capable of verification.

The decision settled a question of misrepresentation. It did not create ownership rights over Aboriginal cultural styles, determine who may legitimately use particular cultural knowledge, or prohibit every overseas-manufactured product employing Indigenous-style imagery. Liability arose from the false or misleading impression created by the products, their labels and the circumstances in which they were sold. Consumer law is an enforcement mechanism against misrepresentation, not a comprehensive Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property or pre-market provenance system. The case shows the value of verifiable provenance and the separate need for infrastructure that makes evidence available before products reach consumers.





9.3 SHARED MEMORY

Made objects can carry memory through material traces of production, use, alteration and repair. Rosner's (2012) research with bookbinders and a San Francisco knitting guild describes traces of skill, use and time as features through which objects evoke memory and acquire value. Restored books and knitted objects were connected to familial practices, fading techniques, cultural traditions and relationships between makers and recipients, demonstrating that the significance of an object can reside partly in the histories accumulated around it rather than in its material form alone (Rosner, 2012).

These histories are distributed across different custodians and settings. A workshop may retain tools, patterns, samples and production records; a family may retain objects together with knowledge of who made, used or repaired them; guilds and community organisations may hold photographs, correspondence and oral histories; museums and archives may preserve selected objects and documentary records. When these forms of evidence become separated, the object may survive while knowledge of its maker, circumstances of production, use and relationship to a community becomes progressively harder to recover.

Australian collections practice already recognises that significance extends beyond an object's physical characteristics. Significance 2.0, developed for the Australian collections sector, assesses historical, artistic, scientific and social or spiritual significance alongside comparative criteria including provenance and interpretive capacity. Social or spiritual significance requires a demonstrated contemporary attachment between an item or collection and an identified community, while provenance asks how documented history adds to the meaning and importance of an object (Russell and Winkworth, 2009).

Craft memory depends on relationships as well as collections. Maker identity, workshop history, materials, repairs, ownership, use, photographs, correspondence and oral testimony can together explain its significance and how its meaning has changed over time. Recording these relationships is particularly valuable when workshops close, enterprises change ownership or practitioners and long-term custodians die, because information that remains common knowledge within one generation may not remain recoverable in the next.

Provenance provides a means of connecting these dispersed forms of evidence where holders consent to documentation and cultural authority permits it. The report's provenance framework already includes subsequent ownership, custody and use together with documented oral histories and cultural meanings, while requiring uncertainty and access restrictions to remain visible within the record. Applied in this way, provenance does more than authenticate an object for trade. It can preserve the documented relationships through which an object participates in family, workshop and community memory without reducing those relationships to monetary value.

9.4 WELLBEING AND BELONGING

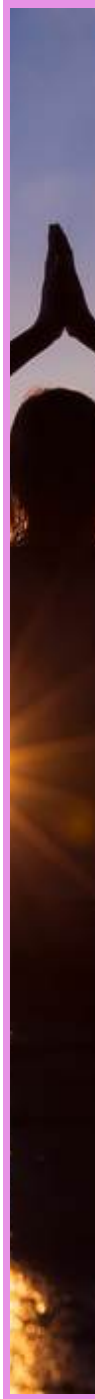
Belonging can develop through repeated participation in a shared material practice. Craft groups bring people together around an activity that provides both a common purpose and a continuing reason to return. Skills are exchanged, unfinished work is carried between meetings, participants observe one another's progress and relationships develop alongside the objects being made. Craft has social value through the recurring relationships that practice can sustain as well as through individual experiences of making.

Australian research provides direct evidence of this function. Maidment and Macfarlane's (2009) qualitative study of nine older women participating in craft groups in Victoria found that the groups supported friendship, mutual aid, learning and a sense of belonging while helping participants address social isolation. The collective setting, as well as the domestic craft activity itself, supported these outcomes: participants shared knowledge and concerns, acquired skills and recognised one another's experience and capability (Maidment and Macfarlane, 2009).

More recent research demonstrates how the material practice contributes to these relationships. Bowen-Viner et al. (2025) examined two textile-based community craft groups and found that sewing materials and the artefacts produced within the groups participated in the formation of social connections and belonging. Objects provided ways for participants to encounter one another's histories, negotiate relationships and imagine shared futures, showing that connection was formed through interaction among people, materials and making rather than through social contact alone (Bowen-Viner et al., 2025).

Recurring participation can sustain these relationships. Community workshops, guilds, textile groups and other collective making environments provide continuity through shared materials, routines, knowledge and peer relationships. They can connect participation with learning and transmission while creating forms of social membership that are not captured by the finished object. A person may enter through interest in a craft and remain because the practice has also located them within a community of people, knowledge and place.

Existing datasets separate these relationships. Cultural participation measures can identify attendance or participation, health research can examine individual outcomes and education data can record particular forms of learning, but none necessarily distinguishes a one-off activity from sustained membership in a community of practice. Recording the setting, regularity and duration of participation, opportunities for peer learning and continuity of the group would make visible the social infrastructure through which craft contributes to belonging.





9.5 TRADE RECOGNITION

Cultural heritage enters trade when claims about who made a product, where it was made and the knowledge or authority under which it was produced become consequential to how that product is described, valued and sold. Trade recognition can support living cultural heritage where it protects a verifiable relationship rather than a generic style or marketing association. Different instruments protect different relationships, including maker or community identity, geographical origin, product specification and compliance with defined production requirements.

The United States Indian Arts and Crafts Act 1990 provides one mechanism centred on producer and cultural identity. It prohibits the marketing of art and craft products in a manner that falsely suggests that they are Indian-produced or the product of a particular Indian tribe or Indian arts and crafts organisation. The legislation makes truthful attribution legally consequential in trade and supports enforcement through civil and criminal penalties (United States Department of the Interior, n.d.). It demonstrates how cultural and producer identity can be protected at the point at which an object is represented and sold.

The European Union's craft and industrial geographical-indication system protects qualifying product names where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic is essentially attributable to geographical origin, at least one production step takes place in the defined area, and the product meets its specification. Any producer whose product complies with that specification may use the registered geographical indication, subject to the applicable verification requirements (European Union, 2023, arts 6 and 47). Maker attribution, cultural authority, craftsmanship and geographical origin remain distinct claims even where they concern the same product.

Australia already regulates components of these relationships through consumer law, country-of-origin rules, trade marks, certification trade marks and sector-specific geographical indications. These mechanisms do not provide a common evidentiary record connecting maker, cultural authority, place, materials, production method and knowledge lineage. Trade recognition consequently depends not only on the existence of a legal right, but on the capacity of producers and communities to assemble, govern and maintain the evidence supporting the claim. For First Nations products and cultural expressions, that evidence must remain subject to First Nations cultural authority and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property rights and protocols.

This capability is becoming relevant to international research and innovation as well as trade. From 1 January 2027, Australian entities will be able to apply for Horizon Europe Pillar II funding under transitional arrangements while treaty processes are completed, including within the Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society cluster (DISR, 2026a). The 2027 Crafting routes to a circular economy topic expressly identifies craft practices as sources of innovation through traditional and place-based knowledge, local resource use, durable production, repair and waste reduction, cultural heritage and local economic development. It also calls for cross-sector knowledge transfer among craft practitioners, designers, researchers and industry professionals, including within fashion and textile value chains (European Commission, 2025d).

Trade protection and research funding perform different institutional functions, but both increasingly require cultural and productive relationships to be capable of being identified and evidenced. A coherent Australian system should allow maker attribution, cultural authority, materials, production, place and provenance to be connected without collapsing them into a single certification claim. Such infrastructure would strengthen the capacity of Australian craft practitioners and producer communities to participate in international trade, research and innovation while retaining the relationships through which their products acquire cultural and geographical meaning.

10

The Crafts Market.

“Information about the place of manufacture and the production model is essential to enable consumers to make informed choices. It allows for a better understanding of how clothing is produced, helps distinguish the most sustainable production methods from others, and enables an assessment of their environmental, social, and health impacts. The act of purchasing can thus become a true act of civic responsibility, by encouraging responsible production and supporting the industry of one’s country or region, its jobs, and its expertise.”

Anne-Cécile Violland, 2026
Member of the French National Assembly
Statement provided directly to the Australian Crafts Alliance for Mapping Australia’s Crafts Sector 2026



10.1 DOMESTIC RETAIL

Australian craft reaches domestic buyers through galleries, markets, independent shops, commissions, studio sales and online channels. The 2014 national mapping described a fragmented market in which practitioners commonly combined several routes to sale and carried much of the work of promotion, fulfilment and customer education themselves (Heath and Pascoe, 2014). This multi-channel structure reflects a sector in which sole traders and micro-enterprises frequently move between direct selling and intermediary retail rather than operating through a single distribution model.

Different retail channels perform different functions within this market. Studio and market sales can maintain a close relationship among practitioner, product and buyer, while galleries, independent retailers, consignment arrangements and wholesale distribution provide curation, presentation and access to audiences beyond the practitioner's immediate network. As products move through these intermediaries, maker identity and production information can become separated from the transaction unless they are carried consistently with the product.

Curated craft retail demonstrates how this relationship can be maintained. Craft Victoria, for example, selects makers for its retail showcase through an application process and presents their work through both its Melbourne gallery and online shop. The model connects identifiable practitioners with retail presentation and market access rather than treating craft as an undifferentiated merchandise category (Craft Victoria, n.d.). Such intermediaries provide a market-development function as well as a point of sale by making the relationship between practitioner and product visible to buyers.

National statistics do not separately identify the domestic craft market. Under ANZSIC, craft-goods retailing falls within Other Store-Based Retailing n.e.c., alongside unrelated specialty goods, while non-store retailing is classified separately (ABS, 2013b). The ABS Retail Trade series, which ceased publication in July 2025, included online sales by store-based and non-store retailers but excluded online sales by non-employing businesses (ABS, 2025b). Its replacement as a principal household-consumption indicator, the Monthly Household Spending Indicator, reports broader spending categories rather than a distinct craft market (ABS, 2025c). These classifications limit the identification of transactions involving craft practitioners and their products.

A domestic craft-market account requires more than retail turnover or business counts. It needs to distinguish the channels through which craft reaches buyers, the intermediary arrangements through which products are sold and whether identifiable maker, place and production information remains connected to the product across those channels. This would allow domestic market development to be assessed in relation to the productive enterprises it supports rather than only through the retail category in which the final transaction occurs.

10.2 PROVENANCE AND PRICE

Information about handmade production can influence product prices and willingness to pay. Church and Oakley's (2018) analysis of 1,490 Etsy micro-enterprises associated handmade and customised offerings with higher prices at both product and shop levels (Church and Oakley, 2018). In an experiment involving a bar of soap, participants were willing to pay an average of 17 per cent more when the same product was presented as handmade rather than machine-made (Fuchs, Schreier and van Osselaer, 2015). These findings demonstrate that information about how a product is made is reflected in the price buyers are willing to pay.

The market effect depends on the production attribute being intelligible and credible to the buyer. Maker identity, place, materials, method and cultural or technical lineage can contribute to perceived authenticity, quality and distinctiveness, but these attributes do not become economically visible simply because they exist. They require information capable of remaining connected to the product as it moves through retail, wholesale and digital channels.

The value of verified origin is realised when it reaches the people who make the product. European evaluation of geographical-indication value chains tracks the price premium attached to protected products and its distribution among producers, processors and other participants in the chain. Verified origin can improve market position and producer returns, and recording how value is retained and distributed shows whether returns reach the people responsible for production (European Commission, 2021).



This report proposes provenance rights as a framework for recognising contributions to the documented history through which products acquire commercial value. Records identifying makers, workshops, communities, material sources and places can support agreed attribution, permissions and remuneration where contributors have relevant rights or enter contractual arrangements. Provenance rights do not presently constitute a general statutory property right in Australia. Their proposed function is to connect documented contributions with appropriate agreements governing commercial use, rather than to create ownership of historical facts through registration alone (CWA, n.d.-b).

European Commission evidence shows that verified origin is associated with higher prices at scale. Products sold under a protected geographical indication achieved, on average, about twice the sales value of comparable products without one, with ratios of 2.85 for wines, 2.52 for spirit drinks and 1.5 for agricultural products and foodstuffs (European Commission, 2020). A provenance registry linking verified production attributes with sale price, distribution channel and practitioner or producer returns would allow Australian craft research to test whether comparable market effects arise and how any additional value is distributed.



10.3 EXPORT READINESS

Export readiness increasingly depends on a product being accompanied by reliable evidence of what it is, where and how it was produced, the materials or ingredients incorporated into it and the enterprises responsible for relevant production stages. These records support customs and origin claims, buyer due diligence, certification and market-specific product requirements. For small craft enterprises, the administrative burden increases where the same production history must be reconstructed separately for each customer, certification scheme or destination market.

The provisional text published following the conclusion of Australia–European Union Free Trade Agreement negotiations provides an example of the evidence contemplated for future preferential trade. Once the agreement enters into force, its proposed origin procedures would allow claims for preferential tariff treatment to rely on an exporter's statement on origin or the importer's knowledge of the product's originating status (DFAT, 2026c). An exporter making that statement must hold information demonstrating that the product qualifies as originating, including, where relevant, evidence concerning the origin of materials used in production (DFAT, 2026c). The rules also distinguish substantive production from operations such as simple packaging, labelling or assembly that are insufficient on their own to establish origin.

This places production evidence upstream of the export transaction. A business seeking to make an origin claim must be able to identify the materials and processing through which the product acquired that status rather than relying only on the location of the final seller or the nationality of the brand. Provenance is broader than a legal rule-of-origin test, but a well-structured provenance record can retain much of the underlying evidence required to establish where materials were sourced, which production stages occurred, who undertook them and where they took place.

European product regulation is creating additional uses for the same underlying data. The Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation establishes Digital Product Passports as structured carriers of product information, with requirements introduced progressively by product group. The European Commission's (2026d) central DPP Registry became operational on 20 July 2026. Textiles and apparel remain a priority product group, with adoption of the relevant delegated act planned for late 2027 (European Union, 2024b; European Commission, 2026a, 2026b). Products imported into the European Union will be subject to applicable DPP requirements in the same way as products manufactured within the Union.

For Australian craft enterprises, export readiness is strengthened by maintaining reliable, reusable product information during normal production. A structured record of product identity, materials, production stages, origin evidence and supporting certifications can be adapted to customs, buyer, sustainability and digital-product requirements as markets change. This reduces repeated reconstruction of evidence and strengthens the capacity of small producers to participate in increasingly traceable, resource-conscious and rules-based international value chains.

10.4 GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT

Public procurement can provide continuing demand for Australian materials, skilled production, repair and specialist services while supporting the productive capability required to supply them. From 17 November 2025, non-corporate Commonwealth entities must generally invite only Australian businesses to submit for procurements valued at $10,000 or more and below the relevant procurement threshold, excluding purchases from standing offers. The rule permits a documented determination that approaching only Australian businesses is inappropriate, and the Indigenous Procurement Policy must be applied where relevant. The thresholds are $125,000 for non-construction procurement and $7.5 million for construction services (Department of Finance, 2025a).

The procurement framework also recognises economic capability beyond the immediate purchase. For procurements above $1 million, or $7.5 million for construction services, officials must also consider economic benefit to the Australian economy, except for procurements covered by Appendix A exemptions or made from standing offers (Department of Finance, 2025c). Commonwealth guidance identifies benefits including the use of otherwise under-utilised Australian resources, development of in-demand skills, adoption of new knowledge and technology, increased productivity and the development and sustainment of industry capabilities (Department of Finance, 2025c). Procurement can operate not only as expenditure on a finished good or service, but as demand capable of supporting the productive system required to deliver it.

Australian-business status does not, however, describe where a particular product was made. Under the Commonwealth Procurement Rules, an Australian business is defined principally through ownership or Australian-market listing, Australian tax residency and its principal place of business (Department of Finance, 2025a). For the purposes of CPR paragraph 5.4, the definition also includes a New Zealand business (Department of Finance, n.d.). A qualifying Australian business may sell goods incorporating different combinations of domestic and overseas materials and production. Where procurement policy seeks to support Australian manufacturing or specialist capability, business identity and product provenance answer different questions.

The Commonwealth Supplier Portal provides an emerging mechanism for improving supplier visibility. It allows suppliers to identify characteristics including Australian-business, small and medium enterprise, Indigenous-business and women-owned-business status (Department of Finance, 2025b). These attributes improve the capacity of procuring entities to locate eligible businesses, but they do not establish the materials, production stages, practitioner skills, repair capability or place-based manufacturing attached to a particular product or service.

Procurement can support craft and specialist manufacturing more precisely where tender specifications and supplier information make these productive attributes visible. Evidence of Australian production stages, material origin, specialist capability, maintenance and repair capacity, workforce skills and relevant certification would allow public demand to support the capability sought through the procurement rather than relying on business location or product description alone. The same information can strengthen whole-of-life value assessment by making durability, repairability and continuing domestic capability part of the purchasing decision.



10.5 CONSUMER INFORMATION



Terms such as handmade, artisan and crafted carry commercial meaning but are not governed by a common production standard across Australian consumer markets. Phillipov, Luckman and McGaurr's (2025) analysis of the Australian Made Campaign found artisanal language, imagery and values applied across markedly different forms and scales of production. Their analysis demonstrates how associations with care, skill, locality and human making can be extended beyond small-scale artisanal production, reducing the capacity of those terms alone to distinguish how a product was actually made.

Craft washing describes a gap between marketing that invokes craft and what the product information substantiates (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026b).

Australian consumer law already requires product claims to be accurate, truthful and capable of substantiation. ACCC guidance applies this requirement to words, images, descriptions and the overall impression created by advertising, packaging, websites and other selling environments. It also advises businesses to make premium claims specific rather than relying on broad or vague language that does not allow consumers to understand what attribute is being claimed (ACCC, n.d.-b). The regulatory gap for craft is not an absence of protection against misleading conduct, but the absence of consistent evidentiary content attached to terms describing production.

Established certification systems demonstrate how complex evidence can be translated into a concise consumer-facing claim. Under the Global Organic Textile Standard, a product may be represented as GOTS-certified only where the relevant processing supply chain through the finished product and business-to-business trade level is certified (Global Organic Textile Standard, 2025). OEKO-TEX STANDARD 100 communicates a different and narrower claim: that the components of a textile article have been tested against specified criteria for harmful substances (OEKO-TEX, n.d.). Each mark communicates a specific claim rather than attempting to certify every characteristic of the product.

Effective consumer information connects a concise display with the product information supporting it. A buyer should be able to understand whether a claim concerns maker identity, Australian production, material origin, geographical origin or craftsmanship and product quality. The Craftsmanship Star Rating Framework in Appendix B gives this last question a consistent structure, bringing five public pillars together around one overall rating out of five. Product-specific information explains the work, materials, making, use and care behind the display (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026b).

This approach is designed for products selected through galleries, markets, retailers, commissions and online listings. The pillars organise related subjects within the product account; origin, geographical-indication entitlement, labour compliance, cultural authority and specialist certification retain their own meanings and supporting evidence. Clear product identity and access to supporting information allow buyers to examine a claim before purchase, with more detail available when they need it.

10.6 DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION

Digital distribution allows craft practitioners and micro-enterprises to reach geographically dispersed buyers without maintaining a permanent retail presence or producing at wholesale volume. A single practitioner may sell through a studio website, specialist marketplace, social-commerce channel and independent retailer at the same time. This expands market access, but it also distributes product information across separate seller accounts and listing systems in which descriptions of maker, origin and production may be recreated each time the product changes channel.

Platform rules increasingly recognise traceability as part of digital-market infrastructure. Under the European Union's Digital Services Act, online marketplaces within the scope of Articles 30 and 31 must collect specified trader information before allowing traders to promote or offer products to EU consumers, display prescribed information and provide interfaces supporting applicable product-information obligations. Article 29 generally exempts platform providers qualifying as micro or small enterprises from these provisions unless they are designated as very large online platforms (European Union, 2022). For marketplaces within scope, traceability is a design requirement as well as an enforcement consideration.

Trader identity and product provenance nevertheless perform different functions. An identifiable seller may be the maker, designer, manufacturer, reseller or intermediary. Etsy's (2025) Creativity Standards illustrate the difference. They separate items made by a seller from original designs produced by a third-party production partner and require relevant production partners to be disclosed. The platform can communicate the seller's declared relationship to production without that relationship constituting an independent product-level provenance record.

A persistent provenance record can provide that product-level continuity across distribution channels. Maker or producer identity, relevant production stages, materials, place and supporting evidence can remain attached to the product independently of the marketplace through which a particular sale occurs. The same verified record can then be referenced from different listings rather than being reconstructed within each platform's proprietary fields or dependent on a marketplace-specific badge.

Digital distribution consequently requires seller identity and product identity to be recorded as related but distinct forms of information. Portable product-level evidence would allow consumers, retailers, platforms and regulators to verify defined production claims while allowing practitioners to change selling channels without losing the evidentiary history attached to their work. For small enterprises operating across several markets, portability converts provenance from information held within an individual listing into reusable digital market infrastructure.





10.7 ULTRA-FAST FASHION

Ultra-fast fashion combines rapid product turnover with the release of very large numbers of low-priced new products. Its market effect extends beyond individual purchasing decisions because high volumes and short use cycles influence price expectations, product longevity and the amount of clothing entering waste and recovery systems. Across the wider Australian clothing market, 1.51 billion new clothing items were sold in 2024, equivalent to approximately 55 items per person. The national clothing benchmark also estimated that 220,000 tonnes of clothing entered Australian landfill in that year (Seamless, 2025).

Australia's principal national clothing-stewardship response remains voluntary. Under Seamless, participating clothing producers contribute four cents for each garment placed on the Australian market, reduced to three cents where specified eco-modulation criteria are met. The resulting funds support circular design, reuse and repair models, collection, sorting, recycling and changes in consumer behaviour (Seamless, n.d.). Participation does not presently extend these responsibilities across the whole market, and in May 2026 Seamless (2026b) called for clothing stewardship to become mandatory at national level.

France has moved further by recognising ultra-fast fashion as a distinct industrial and commercial practice. Law No. 2026-602 defines mode ultra-express through the release of a high number of new product references and weak incentives to repair where these practices reduce product use or lifespan. Detailed thresholds for new product references and criteria concerning incentives to repair are to be specified through implementing regulations. The criteria also apply to online marketplaces and other digital interfaces through which products are sold (French Republic, 2026, art. 1). The regulatory unit is the production and commercial model rather than the use of a particular fashion label or aesthetic.

The same legislation makes production information consequential at the point of sale. Manufacturing locations for clothing products sold online must be displayed clearly near the price and in characters of the same size, while the law provides for an advertising prohibition from 1 January 2027, with implementation governed by the applicable regulations, for products and brands falling within the statutory ultra-fast-fashion definition (French Republic, 2026, arts 1, 2 and 6). This combines producer responsibility, information disclosure and market regulation rather than relying on consumer preference alone to distinguish production models.

Australian market recognition can complement these measures by making product information useful before purchase. The Craftsmanship Star Rating Framework brings Provenance; Materials and impact; Durability; Repair and circularity; and Heritage and transmission into one consumer information structure. It is designed to make the qualities behind a product's presentation easier to understand, while preventative craftsmanship brings questions about materials, construction, care, repair and recovery into design and production. Appendix B also examines French environmental-cost display and durability information as examples of product information available at the point of choice (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026b).

11

Sectoral Perspectives

“EU craft and industrial producers will benefit significantly from the new GI legislation, which will protect employment in the rural economy, provide a distinct point of difference and enhance the international reputation of European craft and industrial products in export markets.”

European Crafts Alliance, 2026
Craft and Industrial Geographical Indications Expert Working Group
Statement provided directly to the Australian Crafts Alliance for Mapping Australia’s Crafts Sector 2026



11.1 ARTISAN TEXTILES AND FASHION

Textiles and fashion bring together fibre preparation, spinning, dyeing, weaving, knitting, felting, printing, patternmaking, cutting, garment construction, tailoring, millinery, footwear, leatherwork, embroidery, finishing, alteration, repair and conservation. Production occurs across sole practitioners, family enterprises, specialist workshops and larger manufacturers, often combining manual, mechanical and digital processes. What counts is whether substantive human knowledge and judgement remain consequential within production, whatever the size of the business or the machinery involved.

A finished textile or fashion product may embody work undertaken by several practitioners and enterprises. Design authorship may sit with a label while patternmaking, cutting, machining, embroidery, leatherwork, finishing and repair occur elsewhere. Conventional retail presentation usually identifies the brand or principal enterprise rather than the distributed labour through which the product was made. Product-level provenance can preserve these relationships by recording consequential production stages and the practitioners, workshops or controlled production teams responsible for them.

Different existing systems already verify particular parts of this production chain. Country-of-origin rules address the legal basis on which an origin claim may be made. Ethical Clothing Australia accredits compliance with Australian workplace laws within relevant textile, clothing and footwear supply chains. Clothing-stewardship systems address product longevity, reuse and material recovery, while fibre and chemical certifications concern defined material attributes. None of these functions establishes craftsmanship by itself, because labour compliance, material composition, origin, circularity and the demonstrated quality of making are different claims (Ethical Clothing Australia, 2026; Seamless, n.d.).

A single garment may carry several legitimate but non-equivalent forms of value. Australian fibre may be transformed offshore; an Australian design may be manufactured domestically or internationally; a locally made product may incorporate imported materials; and a product satisfying an origin or workplace standard may or may not demonstrate assessed craftsmanship. Recording these attributes separately prevents one verified characteristic from being used as a proxy for the whole production history.

Textiles have a long material chain, running from agricultural fibre and processing through manufacturing, retail, use, repair and eventual recovery. Product information capable of retaining material origin, consequential production stages, responsible practitioners or enterprises, repair history and relevant certification would allow productive value to remain visible across the life of the product. It would also support emerging circular and digital market requirements without requiring the same evidence to be reconstructed for each new use.

Australian textiles retain internationally significant fibre, design capability, specialist practitioners and surviving manufacturing capacity. The relationships among them can be made legible at product level. A buyer should be able to distinguish an Australian-designed product from one materially transformed in Australia; Australian-grown fibre from Australian textile manufacture; and either of those claims from a product whose craftsmanship has been independently assessed. Recording each claim separately allows domestic productive capability to be recognised for the work actually undertaken, independent of brand identity or marketing language.

Feature: France recognising different production models in fashion

France shows how materially different forms of textile and fashion production can be recognised through different institutional mechanisms.

At one end, haute couture is recognised as living cultural heritage grounded in specialist knowledge, atelier practice and transmission.

At the other, ultra-fast fashion is regulated as a high-turnover production model with consequences for product longevity, environmental impact and market competition.

Each mechanism makes a production system institutionally visible, so its differences do not have to be inferred from branding or price.

Haute Couture

Haute couture was included in France's National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2025. The official inventory identifies the ateliers of haute couture houses as places in which exceptional artisanal knowledge is practised and transmitted, including the distinct traditions of Flou and Tailleur and the specialist métiers that support couture production. It also recognises workshops and institutions dedicated to métiers d'art as part of the infrastructure through which knowledge, practitioners and production remain connected (French Ministry of Culture, 2025).

Recognition is directed not simply to the finished garment or brand, but to the living body of knowledge required to produce it. The institutional unit encompasses practitioners, ateliers, specialist techniques and the conditions through which those capabilities can continue to be exercised and transmitted.

Ultra-Fast Fashion

At the opposite end of the production spectrum, Law No. 2026-602 of 8 July 2026 defines ultra-fast fashion through industrial and commercial practices associated with large numbers of new product references and weak incentives to repair. The legislation links these practices to environmental responsibility, consumer information and digital marketplaces rather than treating all fashion production as equivalent (French Republic, 2026, arts 1, 2 and 5).

The law provides for environmental contribution adjustments from 1 September 2026, including penalties within specified monetary ranges. On a producer's reasoned request, the relevant scheme operator must limit the adjustment to 50 per cent of the product's selling price excluding tax. The legislation also requires manufacturing-location information in online retail and provides for restrictions on advertising and commercial influencer promotion from 1 January 2027. Detailed thresholds and application requirements are governed by implementing regulations (French Republic, 2026, arts 1, 2 and 5–7).

Institutional Lesson

Different production claims require different instruments

The French approach does not treat heritage recognition and market regulation as competing explanations of fashion. Different mechanisms address different characteristics of production. One recognises and safeguards specialised knowledge, atelier practice and transmission; the other identifies and regulates a production model associated with high turnover, reduced product life and environmental cost. Neither mechanism substitutes for the other.

Together, these mechanisms make how a product is produced institutionally consequential. Craftsmanship, provenance, manufacturing origin, environmental impact and production model are distinct attributes requiring distinct evidence, but each can be made visible rather than left to descriptive marketing alone.



Helen Kaminski, Raffia Harvesting Process | Image: Helen Kaminski

CASE STUDY 10

HELEN KAMINSKI

HELEN KAMINSKI

AUSTRALIAN DESIGN AND MILLINERY

MADAGASCAR & SRI LANKA—RAFFIA ARTISAN PRODUCTION

SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES

Helen Kaminski began with a handmade object. In 1983, Helen Marie Kaminski began making raffia hats for protection from the Australian sun, establishing a material and design language that would develop into an internationally recognised accessories business. The Classic 5 raffia hat is documented at Gundaroo in 1984, locating the brand's early design history firmly within Australia (Helen Kaminski, n.d.). Four decades later, the business provides a useful case through which to examine a more complex question: where does craftsmanship reside when design, material, specialist knowledge and making are distributed across several people and places?

The Australian component of that lineage remains visible through master craftsman Garry Bishop. Bishop joined Helen Kaminski in 1989 after completing a felt-hatter apprenticeship in Picton, New South Wales. He went on to make the company's hat blocks and oversee product development from its Sydney headquarters, including hand-blocking special commissions and collaborative work. His pathway is significant because it connects contemporary product development to an older occupational system in which hatmaking knowledge was acquired through apprenticeship, repeated material practice and instruction from experienced practitioners (Huntington, 2022; Helen Kaminski, n.d.).



> "I actually make the hat from scratch. That's the difference between a craftsman and a milliner."
>
> Garry Bishop, Master Craftsman, Helen Kaminski (quoted in Huntington, 2022)

The finished product, however, carries a much wider geography of skill. Raffia remains central to the brand and is sourced from Madagascar. The company's signature raffia braid requires skilled artisans to split, control and plait the natural fibre by hand; Helen Kaminski (n.d.) states that mastering the technique requires months of training and years of practice. Current company material describes a production network extending across Madagascar and Sri Lanka, including more than 5,000 active artisans in Sri Lanka. Since establishing village workshops in Sri Lanka in 2012, the company has established Artisan HK, working with local village leaders and artisans to build specialist braiding and crochet skills. These programs enable predominantly female artisans to undertake skilled, paid work within their own communities. In 2024, the brand entered into an agreement with Sri Lanka's National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA). Together, they developed a nationally recognised curriculum for crochet and braid skills, formally recognising these specialist craft skills within Sri Lanka.



This makes Helen Kaminski particularly important to the Australian provenance discussion. Australian design heritage, Australian master craftsmanship, material origin and overseas artisan production can all be true of the same product without being the same claim. A finished hat may connect an Australian design history and Sydney product-development capability with Madagascan raffia and skilled hand-production undertaken elsewhere. Its provenance is not adequately represented by brand nationality or a single country label. It resides in the documented relationships among material, technique, practitioner, workshop, production stage and place.

That distinction reflects the wider problem identified across Australian textiles and fashion. A label may hold design authorship while consequential stages of production are carried out by other practitioners or enterprises. Recording those stages independently allows each contribution to remain visible rather than asking one characteristic to stand for the whole product history. For Helen Kaminski, such a record could identify the origin of raffia, the relevant hand-braiding or crochet technique, the artisan production network, Australian design and product-development functions, specialist block-making and finishing, and the people or workshops responsible for consequential stages of manufacture.

The same information is becoming increasingly relevant beyond cultural recognition. European Digital Product Passport infrastructure is moving product markets toward structured information concerning materials, economic operators, repair, environmental performance and production data, while provenance systems can retain the deeper relationship between the object, its makers, skills and places. For internationally distributed craft production, these systems create an opportunity to make complexity more, rather than less, legible: not reducing a product to a single origin claim, but allowing the buyer to understand where its material came from, where skilled work occurred, what techniques were used and which capabilities gave the object its finished form.

Helen Kaminski demonstrates a contemporary form of craftsmanship in which transmission and provenance cross national borders without becoming detached from people. Australian hatmaking knowledge remains present through design history, product development and specialist craft practice; Madagascan raffia brings its own material geography; and skilled artisans in Madagascar and Sri Lanka carry techniques that require training, repetition and judgement. The product is the point at which these capabilities meet.

It makes that whole chain visible. In a global fashion system that routinely collapses complex production into a brand name and country-of-origin label, Helen Kaminski provides an opportunity to recognise a more complete account of value: material provenance, design authorship, craftsmanship, transmission and skilled labour, each attached to the people and places from which it came.



Female artisans create the handcrafted raffia braid and crochet pieces | Image: Helen Kaminski

“Craftspersonship is carried by people. At Helen Kaminski, that spans Australian design and hatmaking, raffia grown in Madagascar, and skilled handcraft in Madagascar and Sri Lanka. Preserving these skills means investing in the people who practise them, ensuring they can be learned and passed on, and keeping the hands behind the finished object visible.”

—Mary Barclay, EVP Global Sales & Marketing, Helen Kaminski
Statement provided directly to the Australian Crafts Alliance for Mapping Australia’s Crafts Sector 2026.

11.2 CRAFT AND INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS

Craft and industrial products include ceramics, glass, jewellery, metalwork, woodwork, leather goods, furniture, stone, musical instruments and related material production. Practice extends from one-off studio work through small-batch production to repeat manufacture within larger workshops and factories. These settings may combine hand tools, specialist machinery, computer-controlled processes and automated equipment. Scale and technology alter the organisation of production but do not, by themselves, establish or exclude craftsmanship.

Australian statistical classifications divide these fields principally by product and industrial activity. Jewellery, ceramics, leather, furniture, clothing and musical-instrument production are distributed across separate manufacturing classes, while repair, conservation, teaching and other associated activities are recorded elsewhere (ABS, 2013a). Occupational classifications divide the same productive system again among artistic, trade, manufacturing and technical occupations (ABS, 2024a). The resulting categories identify outputs and occupations more readily than the relationships through which skilled material production is organised.

Those relationships can extend beyond the enterprise responsible for the finished product. Toolmaking, mould and pattern production, specialist machining, casting, firing, finishing, upholstery, restoration and repair may be undertaken by separate practitioners or businesses. These stages can hold knowledge essential to product quality and continuing production even where they are not visible in the principal manufacturer's industry classification. Product-level evidence needs to identify consequential production stages as well as the enterprise under whose name the finished object reaches the market.

The European Union's craft and industrial geographical-indication regime demonstrates that these otherwise separate material fields can be recognised through a common institutional category without treating their production methods as identical. Regulation (EU) 2023/2411 applies to qualifying products including natural stone, woodwork, jewellery, textiles, lace, cutlery, glass, porcelain, leather, musical instruments and furniture (European Union, 2023). Eligibility remains product-specific, but the framework establishes that industrial classification need not determine whether relationships among product, material, production knowledge and place are capable of formal recognition.

The same principle applies to craftsmanship. A machine-assisted process directed through field-specific knowledge may require substantial judgement in material selection, setup, adjustment, sequencing, finishing and quality assessment. The relevant evidence is what knowledge is required, where consequential decisions occur, how production quality is controlled and whether that capability remains embedded in the productive system.

Recognition of craft and industrial products requires a production view that follows the stages of making and the contribution of human judgement within them. Recording significant production stages, responsible practitioners or enterprises, specialist intermediate capability, repair, materials and place would make visible productive relationships that conventional industry classifications fragment. It would also allow manufacturing capability, longevity and repair to be considered as connected parts of one productive system.





Helen Kaminski (n.d.) identifies brand protection as essential to preserving the authenticity of its design, materials, craftspersonship and artisan expertise. Counterfeit products may imitate the finished object, but they cannot reproduce the provenance, skills and production relationships through which an authentic product is made.
Image: Patty Huntington, Helen Kaminski

“Key sectors in the economy in Europe face significant challenges with the loss of intellectual property through counterfeiting and copying which is undermining the core values of iconic European craft brands and causing the gradual extinction of local skills.”

European Crafts Alliance / Craft and Industrial Geographical Indications Expert Working Group
Image supplied to the Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026.



Fired Brick | Image: Five Mile Radius

CASE STUDY 11

FIVE MILE RADIUS

FIVE MILE RADIUS

LOCAL-MATERIAL ARCHITECTURE AND ARTISANAL BRICKMAKING

BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND

Five Mile Radius began in Brisbane in 2016 as a group of architecture students seeking alternatives to conventional construction materials. Under director Clare Elizabeth Kennedy, it has since developed into an architecture and fabrication studio combining design, material research and making. Its early work investigated how materials drawn from a particular locality could retain evidence of that place within a finished building product (Five Mile Radius, n.d.-a; UAP, 2020).

Brickmaking provided one of the practice's first tests of that proposition. Five Mile Radius (n.d.-b) records that four soils were collected for an early commission, producing different colours after firing. For The Apprenticeship, an exhibition held at artisan in Brisbane in 2016, the practice worked with the Claypave factory to produce handmade bricks from local soils. The bricks were assembled as a screen rather than presented only as material samples (Five Mile Radius, n.d.-b; Stride and Kennedy, 2016).

Kennedy described the production sequence in a contemporary interview. She sourced the clay, formed the bricks by hand in her Brisbane workshop and transported them to a local factory for firing. The factory kiln formed part of the making process without replacing her manual contribution. For Kennedy, provenance encompassed the material, additives and finishes, the mould and its makers, the firing process and the brick's eventual use. In her formulation, "A brick becomes a record of a place and its people" (Stride and Kennedy, 2016).

This production chain closely anticipates the evidentiary logic of Regulation (EU) 2023/2411. The Regulation covers products made by hand, products for which manual work remains an important component, and products manufactured through standardised or machine-assisted processes. A geographical-indication product specification must identify its raw materials where relevant, define its geographical area, describe its production methods and specify the production steps undertaken within that area. Kennedy's account applies comparable provenance questions to an object normally treated as an anonymous industrial product: where its material originated, who transformed it, where it was fired and how those elements affected the finished brick (European Union, 2023, arts 4, 6 and 9).

Five Mile Radius demonstrates how provenance can be designed into an industrial product from the beginning rather than reconstructed after manufacture. By tracing local soils, hand-forming, firing, makers, processes and eventual use, the practice provides a clear Australian example of place-based material production in which design, craftsmanship and industrial infrastructure remain visible within a single production chain. With further documentation of material sources, geographical boundaries, production specifications and producer relationships, this approach could provide a strong foundation for provenance certification, regional material identities and, where the relevant legal criteria are met, future collective geographical-indication development. The practice shows how an otherwise anonymous construction material can become what Kennedy describes as "a record of a place and its people", connecting local materials, skilled making, manufacturing infrastructure and the built environment in a form that can be documented and carried forward.



11.3 ARTISAN FOODS AND BEVERAGES

Food and beverage production shows clearly why craftsmanship, provenance and geographical origin must remain distinct. Cheesemaking, baking, brewing, distilling and preserving depend on learned judgement applied through fermentation, maturation, blending, timing, texture and flavour. Craftsmanship concerns the demonstrated quality with which practitioners apply that knowledge and judgement; provenance records ingredients, producer, place and production history.

Australian regulation already shows that artisan can be defined for specific purposes. Queensland's artisan producer liquor licence applies production and business criteria to craft beer and spirits, while New South Wales planning law defines an "artisan food and drink industry" for land-use purposes (Queensland Government, 2023; NSW Government, 2018). These are functional categories rather than a national craftsmanship standard.

Food production also distinguishes transferable knowledge from protected place. A practitioner may learn a method in one country and apply it elsewhere using different local ingredients. The resulting product may demonstrate craftsmanship without acquiring the geographical right attached to the place from which the method originated. A geographical indication protects a qualifying name identifying a product with the required geographical connection, rather than the underlying craft knowledge itself.

The conclusion of Australia–European Union Free Trade Agreement negotiations makes the separation of production method and protected geographical name more consequential. The provisional text provides for protection of specified European agricultural and spirit geographical indications and development of an Australian GI system through which producers could seek protection for qualifying Australian names, subject to the agreement's entry into force and domestic implementation (DFAT, 2026a, 2026b).

Product-level evidence should distinguish method, ingredient origin, production location, producer and any protected geographical designation. This allows artisan production and transmitted knowledge to develop in new places while preserving the integrity of collective geographical rights.

11.4 HERITAGE AND TECHNICAL SKILLS

Heritage and technical skills include conservation, traditional building, bookbinding, toolmaking, leatherwork, specialist metalwork and other practices used to maintain, repair or reproduce existing objects, structures and equipment. Unlike many product-based fields, their economic value is often realised through commissions, maintenance and specialist services rather than the sale of newly manufactured goods.

Demand is shaped by the condition and stewardship of existing assets. Historic buildings, collections, archives, specialist machinery, musical instruments and other long-lived objects require periodic conservation, repair and replacement of components. These activities create the work through which practitioners continue to exercise material knowledge. Where commissioning becomes irregular, the capability required for future work can contract even while the assets themselves remain.

This creates a measurement problem distinct from identifying endangered crafts. A practitioner may work across conservation, repair, fabrication, reproduction and new work, while the organisation purchasing the service may sit within government, construction, museums, defence or another industry. Conventional statistics identify the commissioning organisation and principal activity more readily than the specialist capability on which the work depends.

The CHARTER Alliance (2024) similarly treats cultural-heritage capability as a skills ecosystem connecting practitioners, employers, education providers and heritage institutions. Its recommendations identify fragmented training, insecure employment and discontinuities between skills supply and sector demand as barriers to maintaining heritage capability (CHARTER Alliance, 2024). Long-term conservation programs, restoration pipelines and maintenance schedules can sustain both demand and the conditions in which specialist knowledge remains active.

Heritage workforce planning requires evidence about both existing capability and anticipated demand. Recording specialist practitioners, workshops and technical fields alongside expected conservation, restoration, maintenance and repair requirements would allow commissioning bodies and training providers to identify where future work is sufficient to sustain skills and where intervention may be required before capability is lost.



12

Entrepreneurship and Business Development.

> “Craft entrepreneurs contribute to regional development, creating social and economic value through their craftsmanship, frequently within family businesses or as independent artisans, while also engaging with their communities.”

Leonardi and Pareschi, 2025
European Journal of Cultural Management and Policy
Research undertaken through the EU-funded HEPHAESTUS Horizon Europe project

12.1 CRAFT ENTERPRISE INCUBATION



Craft entrepreneurship is strengthened when business formation occurs alongside the material conditions required to make. Research on artisan entrepreneurship identifies access to resources, business knowledge and supportive networks as conditions that shape whether skilled practice becomes sustainable enterprise (Pret and Cogan, 2019). Cockpit (n.d.-a) in London provides an established institutional example. It describes itself as the United Kingdom's only business incubator for craft and is home to more than 175 independent creative businesses across its Bloomsbury and Deptford sites. Affordable studio space is combined with in-house business support, professional development and access to selling opportunities, allowing makers to develop commercial capability without separating enterprise formation from production (Cockpit, n.d.-a).

The model is structured around the needs of working makers rather than a generic start-up curriculum. Cockpit provides one-to-one business coaching and workshops, while its studio community places practitioners alongside other specialist businesses working across more than 20 craft disciplines. Open Studios and other promotional activity connect makers directly with buyers, collectors, curators and press. Enterprise support is embedded within the productive and market environment in which the business must operate (Cockpit, n.d.-a, n.d.-c).

Awards and bursaries extend the model further by reducing the cost of entry while a practitioner is still establishing commercial viability. A current Newby Trust Award, for example, provides subsidised shared studio space for up to three years, a grant for craft-skill development, business coaching, workshops and selling opportunities. Support can taper as the enterprise strengthens rather than ending after a short training program (Cockpit, n.d.-b).

Cockpit also measures economic outcomes. Its 2026 impact report, based on makers' financial data for 2023–24 and 2024–25, records total annual maker sales of £7.5 million and estimates £3.90 in value for each £1 invested in Cockpit for the local economy and creative businesses. These are organisation-reported measures, but they demonstrate an institutional approach in which workspace, specialist support and enterprise performance are evaluated together (Cockpit, 2026).

An Australian craft-incubation model could similarly combine selective entry with access to suitable workspace, equipment and field-specific business coaching. Participants could enter with demonstrated technical capability and an identifiable enterprise proposition, then progress through costing, pricing, product development, intellectual-property management, production planning, market testing and buyer engagement. Existing regional institutions, shared workshops and specialist facilities could provide delivery points without requiring every incubator to reproduce the same infrastructure.

The relevant outcome would be the conversion of skilled practice into a viable productive enterprise. Measures could include business survival, improved margins, regular paid work, increased productive capacity, stronger market access and readiness for finance or larger commissions. Incubation would connect workspace, specialist business support, market access and further technical development where needed, creating the conditions in which skilled practice can become economically sustainable production.

“At the Budapest Foundation for Enterprise Promotion, our experience with CRAFTS CODE and the development of the Budapest Action Plan showed that craft entrepreneurs benefit most when business support reflects the specific realities of their sector. Many craft businesses are built on a high level of creative and specialist craft expertise, while operating on a very small scale and facing challenges in areas such as sales, promotion, market access and business development. The Budapest Action Plan therefore proposed a combined approach: tailored training and mentoring, stronger visibility through targeted communication, and opportunities to present and sell products. Bringing these elements together can address barriers that general SME support may not fully capture, while helping craft entrepreneurs strengthen their business capabilities, reach new markets and build more sustainable and competitive enterprises without losing the distinct character and value of their craft.”

András Lázók
Project Manager
Budapest Foundation for Enterprise Promotion
Statement provided directly to the Australian Crafts Alliance for Mapping Australia’s Crafts Sector 2026.

12.2 CRAFT ACCELERATORS AND SCALE-UP

A craft enterprise that has established a viable product, customer base or commissioning history requires a different form of support from a practitioner establishing a first business. Business capability operates as a developmental requirement alongside technical skill rather than as a one-off foundation course (European Crafts Alliance, 2025b). Design & Crafts Council Ireland provides a useful staged model through its Business & Innovation Academy, which separates foundation, growth and accelerator activity while retaining a specific focus on design and craft enterprises. The architecture recognises that entrepreneurial needs change as a business moves from formation to consolidation and then to market expansion (DCCI, n.d.-a).

The DCCI Growth Programme is directed to design and craft companies that are beyond ideation and have been operating for some time. Its curriculum combines strategic planning, customer and competitor analysis, pricing, financial management, routes to market, logistics, e-commerce, sales and growth planning with mentoring tailored to the participating enterprise. The program treats growth as a management problem grounded in the actual economics of a craft business rather than as a general aspiration to become larger (DCCI, n.d.-c).

A more intensive stage is provided through the DCCI Accelerator, delivered with Portal at Trinity College Dublin. The 2025 program offered 10 places to design and craft SMEs with significant international export potential, ran from March to October and provided €5,000 to each participating company alongside individual coaching and mentoring. Support focused on growth, development, international market launches, customer engagement and acquisition, marketing and sales, and concluded with a demonstration stage (DCCI, 2025).

The structure uses progression and selection. Businesses are not placed into the same program regardless of maturity. More intensive support is directed towards enterprises that can demonstrate an existing proposition and a credible opportunity to use specialist expertise, networks or finance. This makes public and institutional support more capable of addressing the particular constraint preventing the next stage of development.

An Australian craft accelerator could use an enterprise diagnostic to identify that constraint. Assessment could examine pricing and margins, working capital, production capacity, customer concentration, intellectual property, supply-chain dependence, wholesale or procurement readiness and the capability to meet a larger order without eroding quality. A development plan could then match the enterprise with specialist mentors, finance providers, production partners, buyers or export-market expertise and establish measurable milestones for progression.

Scale in this model would not be defined by employee numbers alone. A successful craft enterprise might improve margins, increase output through better production systems, develop a second product line, secure larger commissions, license intellectual property, coordinate subcontractors or enter wholesale and international markets while remaining small. Acceleration would strengthen commercially proven craft enterprises without requiring them to adopt a conventional large-firm growth model.

12.3 NETWORKED ENTERPRISE AND PRODUCTIVE DISTRICTS



Enterprise scale can also be created through coordination among independent firms. Italy provides a mature example through production districts, supply chains and the formal contratto di rete, which allows businesses to collaborate around shared objectives while retaining their separate legal identities. The model is particularly relevant to craft because specialist production frequently depends on several small firms contributing different materials, processes or technical capabilities rather than one firm internalising every stage (Confartigianato Imprese, 2025).

Across the Italian economy, the 2025 National Observatory on Business Networks recorded 10,361 active network contracts involving approximately 53,000 firms, an increase on the previous year. These figures cover participating businesses across industries rather than craft enterprises alone (InfoCamere, RetImpresa and Venice School of Management, 2026). Most networks remained small: 87.5 per cent involved fewer than 10 firms and 54.5 per cent involved only two or three. Around 70.8 per cent were contained within a single region, indicating that network formation can build productive scale while remaining closely connected to local economies (InfoCamere, RetImpresa and Venice School of Management, 2026).

Istat's (2017) evaluation of the 2011–2015 period estimated positive effects on employment and turnover relative to what would have occurred without network participation. During the recession, this generally meant smaller declines rather than absolute growth (Istat, 2017). Italian policy has also applied the mechanism directly to artisan enterprise. A 2015 program for digital artisan networks allowed temporary business groupings, network contracts and consortia to apply where at least half of participating firms were micro-enterprises or registered artisan businesses. Current innovation programs continue to recognise network contracts and consortia as formal vehicles for collaborative projects (Istat, 2017; MIMIT, n.d., 2026b).

Enterprise networks differ from shared infrastructure. A network can pool capability without requiring participants to share premises or machinery. One enterprise may coordinate the contract while others provide specialist fabrication, finishing, components, design, repair, packaging or logistics. Common specifications, production schedules and quality requirements allow several small businesses to function as a larger productive system while preserving their individual ownership and field expertise.

An Australian craft-production network could be formed around an identified market opportunity or regional capability. Verified enterprises could register their specialist processes, equipment, capacity and production constraints, allowing a lead business, cooperative or consortium to assemble teams for larger commissions, procurement contracts or product development. Contracts would need to specify responsibility for quality, delivery, intellectual property, provenance information, payment and allocation of benefit among participating firms.

Performance could then be measured at network level as well as enterprise level. Relevant indicators include collective contract value, work distributed among member businesses, new market access, delivery reliability, value retained within the network and continued participation of specialist suppliers. Networked enterprise provides a form of scale especially suited to craft: productive capacity can expand without requiring independent workshops to merge, standardise their practice or become large firms.

12.4 PRODUCT INNOVATION AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT

Product innovation can strengthen craft enterprise when it builds new demand from existing material knowledge rather than treating tradition and commercial development as opposing objectives. Japan's traditional-craft policy provides an established model. Under the Traditional Craft Industries framework, national support is available to recognised producer organisations, businesses and support bodies for activities including successor development, raw-material strategies, demand development, design development and collaboration with other production areas or industries (METI, 2025, 2026a).

The program structure extends beyond preservation. Joint promotion plans can support collaborative market development and new-product development, while revitalisation and cross-sector plans allow producers or groups of producers to work with other traditional-craft businesses or enterprises in different industries. In March 2026, METI (2026b) announced 84 prospective recipients across the national Traditional Craft Industries Support Subsidy, including manufacturing cooperatives, producer organisations, individual enterprises and support organisations.

Market development is also treated as a process of evidence gathering. In April 2026, the Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries (2026b) invited proposals to deliver overseas test marketing in Europe, Asia and other regions. The stated purpose was to examine local acceptance and purchasing tendencies for Japanese traditional craft products, using market research to inform overseas development (Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries, 2026b).

This creates an entrepreneurial sequence that is particularly applicable to craft: identify a production or market opportunity, develop a product or application, test it with defined users or buyers, collect evidence and refine the proposition before larger investment. The knowledge embodied in an established craft can become the basis for new products, collaborations and markets without requiring the underlying practice to be detached from its producers or place.

An Australian mechanism could support recognised practitioners, producer groups or enterprise networks to undertake applied product-development projects with designers, manufacturers, researchers or buyers. Projects might connect wool, ceramics, timber, leather, metal, glass or specialist repair capability with architecture, hospitality, fashion, defence, tourism or advanced manufacturing. Support would be directed to a defined commercial question and include prototyping, limited production, buyer testing and refinement rather than ending with exhibition or promotion.

Evaluation would record whether the innovation creates productive capability as well as attention. Measures could include prototype performance, unit cost, production time, buyer response, repeat orders, material efficiency, repairability, intellectual-property requirements, supply-chain feasibility and the number of participating enterprises able to undertake subsequent production. Craft innovation would then operate as applied research and commercialisation: a structured means of converting specialist knowledge into new economic activity.

12.5 ENTERPRISE SUCCESSION AND RENEWAL



Business succession is a form of enterprise development because productive capability can be transferred, renewed and expanded rather than recreated from the beginning. A craft workshop may contain machinery, tools, supplier relationships, customer knowledge, designs, reputation, technical routines and an established market, yet these assets can be dispersed when an owner retires if the enterprise is treated only as an individual practice. Succession policy can instead recognise the workshop as a transferable productive system.

Japan treats enterprise succession as renewal within wider SME policy. Its 2025 White Paper identifies support for productivity and growth in businesses transforming through succession or restructuring, including equipment investment and specialist assistance (SMEA, 2025a, FY2025 measures, item 4). The fifteenth-call succession promotion guidelines support productivity-related equipment investment by prospective successors in family or employee succession, including machinery and tools (Business Succession and M&A Subsidy Secretariat, 2026, pp. 6–7, 17, 55). Inherited productive resources can therefore support further investment rather than being dispersed at closure.

Kitaakita City provides a more directly relevant regional mechanism. After identifying continuing business closures and learning in 2022 that the sole remaining practitioner of Akita Hachijō weaving intended to close without a successor, the city established a business-succession bank. It surveyed local businesses, worked with the chamber of commerce, agricultural cooperative, finance and succession-support organisations, and used an open-name matching platform to attract potential successors from outside the region (SMEA, 2025b).

The reported results show an active matching process rather than a passive directory. Ten businesses listed through the initiative generated 66 enquiries and 20 site visits or work experiences, with six cases undergoing succession. For Akita Hachijō, the prospective successor used a trial-migration program, visited the workshop and undertook practical experience before entering a three-year regional-revitalisation placement focused on acquiring the technique and preparing for future business operation (SMEA, 2025b).

An Australian craft-enterprise succession mechanism could identify businesses where closure would remove significant productive capability and begin planning before assets are dispersed. A confidential succession record could document equipment, premises, supplier and customer relationships, intellectual property, designs, current orders, provenance records, required technical skills and the owner's preferred form of transfer. Potential successors might include employees, apprentices, family members, external practitioners, entrepreneurs or cooperatives.

Transfer would then combine commercial and technical continuity. Valuation, finance, leases, equipment ownership, staged skills transfer, supplier introductions, customer confidence and licensing or intellectual-property arrangements may all determine whether the enterprise survives. Success should be measured not simply by a change of ownership but by whether productive capability remains active, whether the successor establishes a viable enterprise and whether inherited assets support renewal, new products and future markets.

12.6 A CRAFT ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

The international examples illustrate how craft enterprise support can be organised around different stages of commercial maturity and different forms of productive development. Incubation converts demonstrated skill into an operating enterprise; acceleration strengthens a business with proven demand; networks combine independent capabilities to undertake work beyond the capacity of a single firm; innovation converts specialist knowledge into new products and markets; and succession transfers productive capability rather than allowing it to disappear at closure.

The pathway is not necessarily linear. An established workshop may enter a network without passing through an accelerator, a producer group may undertake an innovation project, and a successor may acquire an existing enterprise and then require incubation or growth support. The common requirement is an institutional system capable of identifying the enterprise's current position, the constraint preventing progression and the form of support appropriate to that constraint.

For Australian craft policy, the resulting measure of development is broader than enterprise size. Business formation, profitability, productive capacity, collaboration, new market activity, investment readiness and successful transfer all represent forms of enterprise development. A pathway organised around these transitions would allow craft businesses to strengthen commercially while retaining the specialist production, skilled judgement and provenance on which their value depends.

Craft enterprises also differ from many conventional small businesses because commercial capability is often inseparable from productive capability. A workshop may depend on specialist equipment, material supply, accumulated technical knowledge, experienced practitioners, established production sequences, repair capability and long-standing supplier or customer relationships. Generic business support may strengthen administration, marketing or financial management, but it cannot by itself preserve the physical and knowledge infrastructure through which the enterprise produces value. Enterprise development must consider whether productive capability is being created, deepened, shared, adapted or transferred alongside the business itself.

This creates an institutional coordination problem. The support required at different points may sit across small-business development, vocational education, manufacturing, regional development, innovation, export, procurement and cultural policy, with different programs measuring different outcomes. Without a connected pathway, an enterprise may qualify for assistance at one point yet lose continuity as its needs change. A craft-enterprise pathway should provide a means of identifying the enterprise's current constraint, directing it to the appropriate form of support and retaining a record of progression across business formation, productive capacity, collaboration, innovation and succession. Measurement should follow those transitions over time rather than treating participation in an individual program as the outcome.



Figure 12.1 A craft enterprise development pathway

International models illustrate five distinct but connected functions of craft enterprise development. Incubation establishes the enterprise; acceleration strengthens an established business; networks create collective productive capacity; innovation connects craft knowledge to new products and markets; and succession retains productive capability through ownership transition. Together, these mechanisms provide an enterprise pathway suited to businesses whose value depends on skilled production rather than conventional firm growth.

Function 01

INCUBATE

Skill → workspace → business formation

Craft-specific workspace, equipment, coaching and enterprise formation.

International precedent: Cockpit, United Kingdom

Function 02

ACCELERATE

Proven enterprise → profitability → markets → investment

Intensive commercial development for enterprises with demonstrated capability.

International precedent: DCCI Business & Innovation Academy, Ireland

Function 03

NETWORK

Independent firms → shared productive capability → larger contracts

Independent specialist enterprises combine capacity without being required to merge or become large firms.

International precedent: Italian enterprise networks and productive districts

Function 04

INNOVATE

New products → cross-sector collaboration → test markets → commercialisation

Prototype, test and refine new applications of craft capability before larger commercial investment.

International precedent: Japan's traditional-craft industry development programs

Function 05

SUCCEED

Enterprise transfer → workshop continuity → new ownership → renewal

Transfer workshops, equipment, knowledge, suppliers, customers and market relationships as productive enterprise assets.

International precedent: Kitaakita Business Succession Bank, Japan

Australian application: The pathway matches support to an enterprise's needs, with *no* fixed entry point or required sequence. Success is measured through business formation, viability, productive capacity, collaboration, innovation and continuity rather than enterprise size alone.

Figure 12.1. A craft enterprise development pathway. Graphic: Australian Crafts Alliance

13

Provenance

“You find a bowl that stops you mid-step. You pick it up, turn it over, and know you want to bring it home. Or perhaps you’ve been following the work of a local maker and want to support what they’re doing—to own something of theirs and watch where their practice goes. The encounter with a craft object rarely begins with a checklist.

Where was it made, and whose hands has it passed through to reach you?”

Sato, 2026
Editor-in-Chief, Kogei Japonica



13.1 PROVENANCE

Provenance is the documented chain, supported by evidence whose verification status is recorded, connecting a tangible product or object to its materials or ingredients, maker or producer, place and method of production; the lineage through which the knowledge and skills required to make it were acquired and transmitted; and its subsequent distribution, ownership, custody and use, together with its documented oral histories and cultural meanings. A provenance registry records these connections, their supporting evidence and any gaps, disputes or uncertainty.

The definition extends beyond country of origin and first ownership. It follows production and transmission as well as later custody, allowing a new object, a repaired object and a collection object to be documented within the same evidentiary structure. Different fields will require different records. Food provenance may emphasise ingredients and batches; a garment may require several workshops; a cultural object may require restrictions determined by knowledge holders.

Evidence may include practitioner declarations, photographs, invoices, workshop records, product specifications, material certificates, oral histories, archival documents and independent assessment. The strength of a claim depends on the relevance and reliability of its supporting evidence. Recording uncertainty protects the integrity of the system where a complete chain cannot be established.

For craft, provenance documentation includes material origins and knowledge acquired before production, records created during making, and subsequent events in the object's history. Records can identify who performed consequential stages, where those stages occurred, which materials or ingredients were used, and how the practitioner acquired the knowledge required to undertake the work. Where production is collaborative, the record can distinguish the contributions of several makers, workshops or producers without reducing the object to a single authorship claim. Repair, alteration and conservation can be added as later events while preserving the earlier production history.

Knowledge lineage requires particular care because transmission is not equivalent to ownership. A record may identify an apprenticeship, teacher, community of practice or other source of learning without implying that the practitioner holds authority to disclose or commercialise all knowledge associated with that lineage. For First Nations material, cultural knowledge, permissions and access conditions must remain subject to the authority of the relevant knowledge holders and communities, including where parts of the provenance record are restricted from public access (AIATSIS, 2020).

The value of this approach is cumulative. A product can remain connected not only to where it was made, but to the people, materials, methods and transmitted knowledge through which it came into being, and to the later histories through which its meaning and use developed. Provenance provides an evidentiary structure through which craftsmanship, cultural heritage, production and subsequent custody can remain connected without treating any one of those attributes as a substitute for the others.



Collection of hats donated to the National Trust by celebrated milliner Gwenda Baker | Images: James Field Photography

CASE STUDY 12

GWENDA BAKER MILLINERY

GWENDA BAKER MILLINERY

MILLINERY AND GLOVEMAKING

ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Gwenda Baker entered manufacturing at 14 during the final years of the Second World War, when the Manpower Office assigned her to G. & R. Wills to make gloves for servicemen. After the war she undertook a four-year millinery apprenticeship with J.W. Richmond & Co. Ltd in Gawler Place, Adelaide, and remained with the firm for more than a decade. She later took charge of the model workroom at Miller Andersons department store, producing individual hats for Adelaide clients (National Trust of South Australia, 2025; Millinery Australia, n.d.).

Baker's contribution extended beyond the objects she made. She taught millinery and French flower-making for approximately 30 years, beginning at the South Australian Institute of Technology and continuing through subsequent institutional changes, before ending her teaching career in 1992. Several students became professional milliners or lecturers, carrying the knowledge into another generation. She also judged millinery and French flower exhibits at the Royal Adelaide Show for 50 years and was inducted into the Millinery Association of Australia Hall of Fame in 2009 (National Trust of South Australia, 2025; Millinery Australia, n.d.).



In 2025, Baker donated an extensive collection of hats, antique millinery materials and accessories to the National Trust of South Australia. The collection spans the mid-nineteenth century to the early twenty-first century and includes inherited family hats, student work and a much larger body of Baker's own creations. Published descriptions preserve material and construction information for individual objects, including shot silk, organza, sinamay, feathers and machine stitching (National Trust of South Australia, 2025).

These records allow the hats to function as more than surviving historical objects. They connect individual works, at varying levels of detail, to maker, approximate date, materials, construction, place of practice, training lineage and subsequent transfer into a public collection. The distinction between Baker's own work, student work and inherited family objects is especially important: provenance depends as much upon preventing incorrect attribution as it does upon establishing attribution.

The case also demonstrates why transmission forms part of provenance. Baker's apprenticeship connects her practice to an earlier commercial millinery system, while three decades of teaching connect that knowledge to subsequent practitioners. The surviving hats provide tangible evidence through which materials, methods and learned capability remain associated with that lineage. UNESCO (n.d.-b) similarly locates the continuity of traditional craftsmanship in the knowledge and skills of practitioners and their transmission, rather than in the preservation of craft objects alone.

Baker's collection demonstrates the value of documenting provenance while the people who hold the knowledge of an object are still able to identify its history. Maker, materials, techniques, training relationships and custody can be recorded together, preserving not only the object but the skilled practice and transmission relationships through which it was produced. The collection provides an unusually rich record of Australian millinery as both material culture and living craft knowledge, connecting apprenticeship, professional practice, teaching and preservation across generations.

13.2 NATIONAL REGISTRY

A national provenance registry provides the common evidentiary record through which the relationships identified in the provenance framework can remain connected over time. Its purpose is not limited to confirming where a product was made. It must be capable of linking a tangible object to practitioners or producers, materials or ingredients, places and methods of production, knowledge lineage and transmission, and, where relevant, later ownership, custody, repair, use, oral history and cultural meaning. The registry gives persistence to relationships that would otherwise remain dispersed across workshop records, personal archives, certification systems, collection files and the memories of practitioners.

Existing registers demonstrate parts of this function without providing an equivalent cross-sector model. The Harris Tweed Authority maintains records of authorised production and controls use of the Orb mark for cloth meeting the statutory definition of Harris Tweed. Germany's Lost Art Database makes cultural-property information discoverable where provenance, ownership history and potential unlawful loss are relevant. Their legal purposes differ, but both demonstrate the value of an identifiable record that persists beyond a single transaction or individual owner (Harris Tweed Authority, 2025; German Lost Art Foundation, 2021).

An Australian provenance registry would need to preserve both the record and the basis on which it was created. Practitioner declarations, material records, certification results, photographs, oral histories and later collection information may enter at different times and carry different levels of certainty. New evidence should be capable of extending or correcting an existing record without erasing its earlier state. Later events form part of provenance when a product is repaired, altered, inherited, donated, resold or transferred into a public collection, and they sit alongside the circumstances of original production.

Access cannot be treated as identical to registration. Some information may be public, while commercial, personal or culturally restricted material requires controlled access. First Nations knowledge, cultural meanings and permissions must remain subject to the authority of the relevant knowledge holders and communities, including decisions about what may be recorded, disclosed or reused (AIATSIS, 2020). A national register must accommodate restricted records as part of provenance integrity rather than treating non-public information as an evidentiary gap.

Registry governance must establish who may create, amend and verify records; how disputes and uncertainty are shown; how records survive business closure or practitioner death; and how specialist bodies retain authority over claims within their competence. Trade marks, copyright, designs, geographical indications, cultural authority and consumer law would continue to perform their existing legal functions. The registry instead provides the connective evidence through which maker, capability, transmission, product and subsequent history can remain associated across those systems.





13.3 PRACTITIONER AND PRODUCT RECORDS

Provenance requires separate but linked identification of the Craft Practitioner, the atelier or producer enterprise and the product or object. These are different parts of the evidentiary chain. A person may contribute to many products, several practitioners may contribute to one product, and a producer may coordinate production without personally undertaking every consequential stage. Keeping the records distinct allows provenance to attribute human contribution without confusing individual making, enterprise responsibility and product identity.

Within the proposed registry, each verified Craft Practitioner receives a Unique Provenance Identifier. The Maker's Mark is the practitioner-facing expression of that identifier when it is applied to, or securely associated with, a product, its packaging, accompanying documentation or provenance record. It identifies the practitioner and attributes that person's contribution. It does not, by itself, establish the product's materials, geographical origin, production method or level of craftsmanship, because those claims require their own supporting evidence or assessment.

A separate atelier or producer record identifies the workshop, studio, business or other productive organisation responsible for coordinating or controlling production. Where making is distributed, the atelier or producer record identifies the organisation coordinating the work. A garment may involve a designer, cutter, machinist, embroiderer and finisher; a ceramic product may pass from a studio to a specialist kiln; a repaired object may acquire another practitioner and workshop later in its life. Linked records allow each contribution and place to remain visible while the finished product retains a coherent history.

The product record provides the point at which these relationships meet. Depending on the field, it may identify a unique object, model, edition, garment, batch, lot, run or controlled product line. It can connect relevant materials or ingredients, significant production stages, makers and producers, places, specifications, repairs, subsequent ownership or custody and documented knowledge lineage. Collaborative products may carry several Maker's Marks without requiring one contributor or brand to absorb the identities of the others.

Traditional hallmarking provides a useful structural comparison. British precious-metal articles carry separate marks that identify the sponsor, metal fineness and assay office, with additional marks used in specified circumstances. The sponsor is responsible for submitting the article for hallmarking and is not necessarily its maker, illustrating why one identifier should not be treated as proof of every production claim (Assay Office London, 2025).

A linked digital system extends this principle beyond the limited information a physical mark can carry. Persistent practitioner, producer and product records allow the object to remain connected to its makers, materials, places, transmitted knowledge and later history as it moves through repair, resale, collection or succession. The structure preserves provenance as a relationship among people, capability and tangible things rather than reducing it to a brand or serial number.

13.4 CERTIFICATION MARK

A certification mark communicates that a defined product, process or other attribute meets published rules assessed through an authorised system. It performs a different function from a standard trade mark, which identifies a trader, and from a Maker's Mark, which attributes a verified practitioner's contribution. A geographical indication protects a qualifying place-linked name, with its use governed by the applicable product specification. Provenance contains several kinds of information, and each instrument verifies only the claims within its stated scope.

Australia already permits certification trade marks under the Trade Marks Act 1995. The rules governing a certification trade mark must specify the requirements that goods or services must meet, the method for determining compliance, the attributes required of approved certifiers and users, and procedures for resolving disputes. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission must approve the certification rules before IP Australia can register the certification trade mark (Commonwealth of Australia, 1995; ACCC, 2025). The mechanism provides an existing legal route for an industry-defined standard.

For craft, the key requirement remains separation of claims, including where a composite label is used. Practitioner identity, material origin, geographical-indication entitlement and cultural authority are established through separate evidence. The Craftsmanship Star Rating Framework organises five public pillars around an overall product rating, supported by product-specific information. Origin, geographical-indication entitlement, labour compliance and cultural authority retain their own rules, evidence and decision-making authority (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026b).

The Southern Cross Mark developed within the Australian craft and provenance framework illustrates how a defined certification claim could be connected to a wider provenance record. Its use as a registered certification trade mark would require the applicable approvals and registration, with published rules specifying what the mark certifies and how compliance is assessed (CWA, n.d.-b; ACCC, 2025). A Maker's Mark attributes a verified practitioner contribution, the Craftsmanship Star Rating is designed to communicate an overall product result explained through five public pillars, and a geographical indication protects a qualifying place-linked name used in accordance with its product specification. These instruments can be connected without treating one as evidence for all the others (CWA, n.d.-b).

Products often combine several legitimate claims. A garment may be Australian designed, contain Australian fibre and pass through local and overseas workshops. CSR information concerns the defined product, batch or consistently specified product line, with supporting information explaining its scope and qualities. Separate evidence establishes production origin, material origin, geographical entitlement or other claims, while linked provenance records preserve the wider history.

A certification mark is a communication instrument within the provenance system, not a substitute for provenance itself. Its credibility depends on published rules, appropriate evidence, competent assessment and control over use. Linking the mark to the underlying record allows buyers, commissioners and later custodians to understand what has been verified while preserving the fuller cultural and productive history that certification alone cannot carry.





13.5 PROVENANCE RIGHTS

Provenance records support attribution, enforcement and economic participation by preserving evidence of who made a product, how it was produced and how its history has subsequently been used. Existing legal rights attach to different parts of that relationship. Copyright may protect qualifying original expression; registered designs protect specified visual features; trade marks distinguish commercial source; moral rights protect attribution and integrity in relation to qualifying works; and contract can govern agreed uses of names, images, designs, histories and other material (Commonwealth of Australia, 1968, 1995, 2003). Provenance does not replace these rights, but it can preserve the factual evidence on which their exercise depends.

Australia's resale royalty scheme provides a direct example of an economic right that can extend beyond first sale. The Resale Royalty Right for Visual Artists Act 2009 applies to eligible commercial resales of specified visual artworks, including qualifying ceramics, fine art jewellery, glassware, tapestries and weavings. Where the statutory conditions are met, a 5 per cent royalty applies to eligible resales (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009). Continuing identification can remain economically consequential after first sale.

Provenance can also support licensing and contractual participation where a maker's identity, workshop history, production story or documented association with place is used commercially. A dated record connecting the practitioner to a particular product can assist authenticity claims, collection documentation, licensing negotiations and action against misleading attribution. It may also preserve evidence of collaborative contribution where several makers participated and later market presentation risks reducing the object to a single brand or producer.

These functions do not create a general entitlement to payment whenever a maker's history, reputation or regional identity appears in commerce. The concept of provenance rights is most useful as a framework for identifying the economic and attribution interests that persistent provenance evidence can support, rather than as a claim that registration itself creates a new property right (CWA, n.d.-b). Any future statutory extension would need to define its subject matter, holder, triggering use and relationship to existing law.

First Nations cultural knowledge and authority call for particular care. A registry must not convert collectively held knowledge, cultural meaning or restricted material into private property simply because it has been documented. Provenance can instead record who holds cultural authority, what permissions apply, what information may be disclosed and where use is restricted, allowing attribution and economic participation to be supported without displacing the governance from which those rights and responsibilities arise.

Provenance rights provide continuity of evidence. As an object moves through sale, repair, exhibition, collection and inheritance, the documented connection to maker, knowledge, place and production can remain available to support whatever legal, contractual, cultural or economic rights legitimately attach to that history.

13.6 DIGITAL PRODUCT PASSPORTS

The European Union's Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation establishes Digital Product Passports for product groups introduced through delegated acts. A passport provides structured, machine-readable product information linked to a unique product identifier. Depending on the applicable product rules, information may concern economic operators, materials, substances of concern, repair, durability, environmental performance and compliance documentation (European Union, 2024b). It creates a regulatory product-information layer rather than a general provenance record.

Textiles and apparel are a priority product group under the first ESPR Working Plan, with the relevant delegated act planned for 2027. Final data requirements, level of product granularity, access rights and commencement arrangements will be determined through that instrument. The European Commission's (2026d) central Digital Product Passport Registry began operation on 20 July 2026, providing the registration infrastructure through which unique product identifiers and required metadata can be connected to passport information (European Commission, 2025b, 2026a, 2026b, 2026d).

The overlap with provenance is significant but partial. Both systems may identify a product, maker or producer, materials and particular production stages. Craft provenance extends further by recording the lineage through which knowledge and skills were acquired and transmitted, the people contributing to consequential stages of production, place and method, and later distribution, ownership, custody, repair and use. It may also include oral histories, cultural meanings and restrictions determined by knowledge holders. Those elements do not become regulatory passport data merely because they are connected to the same product.

Cultural heritage is where the two systems separate most clearly. A Digital Product Passport may need to disclose information required for market access, repair or environmental performance, while parts of a provenance record may be commercially sensitive, personal or culturally restricted. First Nations knowledge and permissions must remain subject to cultural authority rather than being made public through an export or compliance system. Interoperability requires selective reuse of verified fields rather than automatic publication of the whole provenance record.

For Australian craft enterprises, reliable information can be created once and reused where appropriate. Material origin, producer identity, production stages, certification results and product identifiers recorded during normal production can be mapped to future buyer or regulatory requirements without reconstructing the supply chain after an export opportunity arises. The same record can retain knowledge lineage, maker attribution and subsequent object history for domestic cultural and provenance purposes.

Digital Product Passports provide an important external use case for structured provenance data, but they do not define the scope of provenance. A national system should be capable of exporting verified product information required by regulatory regimes while preserving the wider relationship among tangible object, maker, capability, transmission, place and cultural meaning that gives craft provenance its distinct function.





13.7 VERIFICATION

Verification gives evidentiary weight to individual claims within a provenance record. Because terms such as handmade, artisan and crafted can be applied across different production systems, verification must identify the specific proposition being tested rather than certify an undifferentiated idea of authenticity (Phillipov, Luckman and McGaurr, 2025). A useful record states the claim, the product, practitioner, batch or process to which it applies, the evidence considered, the person or body responsible for assessment and the result.

The level of assurance should correspond to the nature of the claim. Practitioner identity may be verified once and maintained subject to change; a material claim may rely on supplier documentation or independent certification; a production-stage claim may require workshop records or inspection; and a geographical indication depends on an approved specification and compliance controls. The Craftsmanship Star Rating Framework brings together information across five public pillars. A practitioner credential, material certificate or individual performance test supports its own stated claim and scope; the relationship of that evidence to a product rating requires the separately developed assessment method (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026b).

Country-of-origin law illustrates the importance of that separation. A product may lawfully satisfy an Australian-made claim without every material, component or production stage being Australian. Provenance can record the more detailed chain by identifying what occurred, where, by whom and using which materials, without contradicting the legal country-of-origin claim. In the same way, a verified maker identity should not be treated as evidence of local material origin, and a material certificate should not be treated as evidence of the maker's knowledge lineage or craftsmanship.

Verification must also accommodate incomplete and changing evidence. Historical attribution may be probable rather than certain; a supplier may change; a repair may introduce new materials; or later research may correct an earlier record. The status of a claim should distinguish what is declared, documented, independently assessed, disputed or unknown, and amendments should remain visible. Recording uncertainty protects the integrity of provenance because it prevents absence of evidence from being converted into an unsupported assertion.

Authority and assessor competence are claim-specific. A composite rating may require field competence in making together with appropriate evidence or expertise for material impact, performance, repair and transmission. Technical assessors cannot assume authority over First Nations cultural knowledge, permissions or meanings; those matters remain with the relevant knowledge holders and communities. Governance must identify who is competent and authorised to examine each form of evidence contributing to the decision.

Verification operates across the provenance system, giving confidence to the connections among product, maker, producer, material, process, place and transmission while preserving differences in evidence and authority. Supporting information should distinguish established findings, estimates, attributed accounts, disputed claims and unavailable information. An evidence gap is different from a demonstrated weakness. Detailed CSR decisions about eligibility, evidence sufficiency and the combination of findings belong in the separately developed and tested Implementation Guide. Linked records can support consumer information, procurement and digital product systems while retaining the object's fuller provenance.

14

Regulatory Environment

“Policies and/or legal and administrative measures for inclusive economic development are established or revised to consider intangible cultural heritage and its safeguarding.”

UNESCO, 2018
Overall Results Framework for the 2003 Convention, Indicator 13.4



14.1 POLICY LANDSCAPE

Australian craft operates across a regulatory environment in which different public systems recognise different parts of the same productive activity. Arts policy supports cultural practice, organisations and participation; vocational education governs recognised training; industry policy addresses manufacturing and productive capability; heritage systems protect places, objects and conservation practice; intellectual-property law protects defined rights; consumer law regulates representations; food regulation governs particular products; procurement determines conditions of public purchasing; and trade policy governs market access. Each function is legitimate within its own remit, but none is designed to hold the relationships among skilled practice, production, transmission, provenance and product. The regulatory environment sees components of craft activity without necessarily recognising the productive system that connects them.

The consequence is not simply administrative fragmentation. The same practitioner, enterprise or object may be visible differently depending on the system being used. A stonemason may be recognised through construction or heritage work, a ceramicist through visual-arts classifications, a cheesemaker through food regulation and a textile producer through manufacturing or fashion policy. Where skills, materials, production stages and knowledge lineage cross these boundaries, no single regulatory record necessarily preserves how they relate. This can separate cultural recognition from industrial capability, or product regulation from the transmitted knowledge required to sustain production.

Legal and administrative instruments each answer a different question. A trade mark identifies commercial source; a certification trade mark verifies compliance with approved rules; a geographical indication protects a qualifying place-linked name; vocational regulation identifies recognised qualifications and providers; consumer law tests whether representations are misleading; and heritage law may protect an object, place or recognised heritage value. Each instrument operates within its defined scope. Craftsmanship certification requires published assessment rules and supporting evidence, while the fuller provenance chain may connect information held across several systems.

A coordinated regulatory approach requires connection rather than consolidation. Existing agencies should retain their statutory functions, while common definitions, persistent identifiers and compatible evidence allow information to move between systems. A verified practitioner record, for example, could support attribution without replacing a qualification record; a product record could hold material and production evidence without becoming a trade mark; and a geographical indication could link to a provenance record without absorbing individual maker identity.

The regulatory gap is consequently relational. Australia possesses many of the component instruments required to govern craft production, but the relationships among practitioner, capability, transmission, materials, process, place and product are not administered as one recognised sectoral evidence base. Connecting those functions would allow cultural, industrial, training, trade, consumer and heritage policy to operate from consistent information while preserving the distinct legal purpose of each instrument.

14.2 FUTURE MADE IN AUSTRALIA

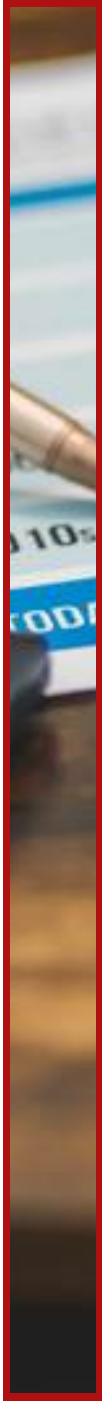
The Future Made in Australia Act 2024 establishes a National Interest Framework for significant public investment intended to unlock private investment at scale. The Framework contains a Net Zero Transformation Stream and an Economic Resilience and Security Stream. Under the latter, a sector may align with the Framework where some level of domestic capability is necessary or efficient to deliver economic resilience and security and the private sector will not provide the required investment without government support (Commonwealth of Australia, 2024).

The legislation also connects investment decisions to broader community benefits. These include safe and secure jobs, skills development, inclusive workforce participation, positive outcomes for local and First Nations communities and stronger domestic industrial capability through local supply chains. The architecture evaluates productive capacity not only as plant or capital equipment, but through the workforce, supply-chain and community conditions required for capability to operate and persist (Commonwealth of Australia, 2024).

Australian fashion and textiles illustrate the relevance of this approach. The Australian Fashion Council and R.M.Williams (2026) report that approximately 97 per cent of clothing and textile products are manufactured offshore, while Australia remains a major producer of premium natural fibres. Wool-sector analysis has also identified the concentration of early-stage processing outside Australia and the vulnerability created when domestic processing capacity contracts (Australian Fashion Council and R.M.Williams, 2026; Australian Wool Innovation and WoolProducers Australia, 2024). The issue is not simply whether a finished garment can be made locally, but whether the chain from fibre through processing, textile production, specialist manufacturing and finishing retains sufficient capability. Loss of one intermediate stage can render upstream materials or downstream skills commercially unusable even where both remain present.

A sector assessment under the Economic Resilience and Security Stream would require evidence that the capability is nationally significant, that private investment alone will not maintain it and that intervention would provide public value. For craft-related manufacturing, this shifts attention from isolated equipment purchases to the productive ecology around them: specialist skills, maintenance knowledge, intermediate processors, suppliers, training pathways, viable demand and firms able to use the capability.

Provenance strengthens that evidence by showing where materials, production stages, practitioners and productive knowledge are located. It can make domestic capability and supply-chain dependence more legible. A sector capable of documenting what is produced, where, by whom and through which skills is better placed to demonstrate both resilience risk and the economic value of retaining productive capability in Australia. The relevant evidence is consequently sectoral and relational, rather than a count of isolated firms or machines.





14.3 AUSTRALIA AND EUROPEAN UNION TRADE

Negotiations for the Australia–European Union Free Trade Agreement concluded on 24 March 2026. The provisional text is undergoing legal revision and the agreement has not yet entered into force. DFAT (2026a) expects signature in late 2026 or early 2027, after which Australian parliamentary scrutiny and European approval processes will follow before entry into force. This is the primary trade-law setting in which Australia is now designing new geographical-indication arrangements outside the existing wine regime.

Under the concluded agreement, Australia has agreed to protect 396 European geographical indications, comprising 231 spirit names and 165 agricultural-product names. Negotiated treatments preserve continued use, grandfathering or phase-out arrangements for particular terms where Australian commercial use required accommodation (DFAT, 2026b). A separately revised Australia–European Union Wine Agreement will extend European protection to seven additional Australian wine geographical indications and update reciprocal wine-origin arrangements (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 2026).

The non-wine outcome creates a new domestic institution-building requirement. Australia has committed to establish a geographical-indication system through which the agreed European names can be protected and through which Australian applicants can seek protection for new domestic geographical indications. DFAT (2026b) states that a GI must first be protected in its country of origin before protection can be sought in another jurisdiction. The proposed system would provide an additional domestic route for Australian names, alongside existing certification trade mark protection. Its design should establish clear application, examination and objection procedures through which Australian applicants can seek protection and prepare for recognition under the agreement (DFAT, 2026b; IP Australia, n.d.-a).

The agreement also expressly recognises the value of geographical indications that protect, preserve or promote First Nations Indigenous knowledge. This does not determine how Australian cultural authority or ICIP should be governed, but it places First Nations interests within the implementation environment for the new system. Any domestic process will need to distinguish geographical protection from authority over cultural knowledge, names and practices and ensure that the creation of a registrable right does not displace existing community governance.

For the wider craft sector, the agreement establishes institutional precedent rather than automatic coverage. The negotiated GI commitment concerns agricultural goods and spirits, while craft and industrial products remain outside that list. Australia is nevertheless establishing administrative capacity for examination, objection, registration and enforcement of new non-wine origin rights. The design choices made now will shape whether future Australian origin protection develops as a series of disconnected product regimes or as a coherent national architecture capable of accommodating different place-based products under appropriately distinct legal tests. That institutional question is separate from the substantive eligibility rules that apply to any individual GI.

14.4 CRAFT AND INDUSTRIAL ORIGIN PROTECTION

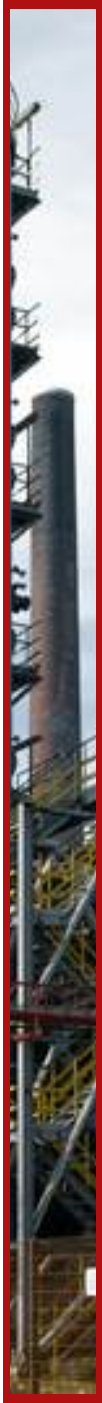
Australia currently has no dedicated statutory category for geographical indications covering craft and industrial products. Wine geographical indications are protected through the Wine Australia Act 2013 and associated regulations, while other place-linked product claims may rely on certification trade marks, collective trade marks, passing off and consumer law. These mechanisms can protect particular interests, but they do not create a single public right equivalent to the European Union's craft and industrial geographical-indication regime. Producer groups must assemble protection through instruments designed for different legal purposes.

The mechanisms also differ in who sets the rules and who administers them. A certification trade mark can establish rules concerning origin, quality or production and can be used by authorised parties who meet those rules. A collective trade mark identifies goods or services associated with members of an organisation. Consumer law can address misleading claims, while passing off protects reputation in appropriate circumstances. None of these mechanisms, however, provides a dedicated national pathway requiring a producer community to define a place-linked product, agree a specification and obtain a geographical right designed specifically for craft and industrial goods (Commonwealth of Australia, 1995; IP Australia, n.d.-a).

Regulation (EU) 2023/2411 now provides that pathway in the European Union for qualifying products such as ceramics, textiles, jewellery, natural stone, glass, woodwork, leather goods, cutlery, furniture and musical instruments. The regime is collective and specification-based, and it is administered through a public registration system. For third-country applicants, the Regulation requires evidence that the geographical indication is protected in its country of origin before an application can proceed through the European system (European Union, 2023).

The country-of-origin requirement makes the form and scope of Australian protection consequential. A producer group would need to establish that its geographical indication is legally protected in Australia and that the product meets the European regime's separate eligibility and verification requirements. Existing certification trade mark protection may provide a relevant route, subject to examination of the particular registration and its rules. The absence of a dedicated Australian craft-GI statute should not be treated as an automatic bar to European registration (European Union, 2023; EUIPO, n.d.; IP Australia, n.d.-a).

The policy question is whether existing mechanisms provide an accessible and effective pathway for Australian craft and industrial producer groups, or whether a dedicated regime would improve recognition, administration and enforcement. Provenance evidence can support either approach by documenting the connection among product, production, place and reputation. The case for reform rests on the adequacy of existing protection and the benefits of a dedicated system, rather than on an assumption that no domestic protection is available.





14.5 INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) recognises traditional craftsmanship as one of five domains of intangible cultural heritage. Its safeguarding framework is directed principally to the knowledge and skills through which cultural practices are created and transmitted, together with the social and material conditions that allow communities, groups and individuals to continue them. Identification, documentation, research, education, transmission and community participation sit within the Convention's institutional obligations (UNESCO, 2003).

Australia is not a State Party to the 2003 Convention. Australian organisations can participate in international safeguarding networks, and an Australian non-government organisation is accredited within the Convention system, but the Commonwealth does not carry the State Party obligations relating to national inventories, safeguarding policy, periodic reporting and participation in the Convention's intergovernmental mechanisms (UNESCO, n.d.-a). This creates a different institutional position from countries that have incorporated living heritage into national administrative systems.

For craft, the Convention's emphasis falls on safeguarding knowledge as well as preserving objects. A hat, vessel, building technique or textile may survive while the practical capability required to reproduce, repair or interpret it disappears. National inventories and safeguarding measures can record practitioners, transmission settings, training risks and community authority alongside the cultural manifestation itself. This aligns with the provenance framework in which the tangible product remains connected to the knowledge and transmission through which it was produced.

The Convention places communities at the centre of safeguarding. Article 15 calls for the widest possible participation of the communities, groups and individuals who create, maintain and transmit intangible cultural heritage, and the Convention respects the customary practices that govern access to particular aspects of that heritage (UNESCO, 2003). These provisions give an Australian framework a clear model: First Nations cultural authority and community governance direct which practices are identified and how they are recorded, and national inventories and safeguarding measures are built around that authority.

Austria demonstrates how participation can be accompanied by economic and workforce evidence. Its national study drew on 2015 Austrian Economic Chamber statistics, reporting 151,558 active trade-group memberships associated with the traditional-craft fields examined and 537,418 employees in businesses within those fields (Sandgruber, Bichler-Ripfel and Walcher, 2019). For Australia, the example is institutional rather than numerical: living craft knowledge can be treated simultaneously as cultural heritage, productive capability and a transmission responsibility.

Ratification would add a treaty-based framework for safeguarding transmitted craft knowledge, including obligations concerning identification, inventories, safeguarding measures and reporting (UNESCO, 2003). It would not replace industry, training, heritage or provenance systems, but would provide an established public framework through which the continuity of knowledge and practice can be identified and supported with the participation of the communities that hold it.

14.6 STATISTICAL CLASSIFICATION

The Occupation Standard Classification for Australia replaced ANZSCO for Australian statistical use in December 2024. OSCA 2024 remains the current national occupation classification and is used for the collection, organisation and reporting of occupation statistics. It improved Australian control over occupational coding and introduced substantially greater occupational detail, but craft-related work remains distributed across professional, trade, production and other occupational groups (ABS, 2024a).

The classification retains Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals and identifies occupations including painter, potter or ceramic artist and sculptor, while glass artists, leadlighters, mosaic artists, printmakers, quilters and textile artists remain within Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals nec. Cabinetmakers, jewellers, stonemasons, shoemakers, musical-instrument makers, textile workers and repair occupations are classified elsewhere. The result is statistically consistent with OSCA's purpose of classifying jobs by skill level and specialisation, but it does not create a sector category capable of following related material practices across occupational groups (ABS, 2024a, 2024b).

Occupational classifications inform labour-market analysis, workforce planning, skills policy and the evidence used by governments and industry. Main-job coding identifies a person's principal occupation. Craft practitioners often combine that occupation with teaching, running a micro-enterprise, repair, transmitting a specialist technique or working across several production settings, and adding those roles to the national record would bring the full range of craft work into view. Industry classification adds a second dimension, and a crosswalk linking occupation, enterprise and material field would connect the two.

The current maintenance cycle provides a near-term opportunity to improve occupational visibility. The ABS consulted on its OSCA 2027 draft from 17 August to 18 September 2026 and is reviewing submissions ahead of the revised classification's scheduled release in March 2027 (ABS, 2026b). The update focuses on six-digit occupations and can improve visibility of particular jobs, titles and emerging specialisations where sufficient evidence supports change.

No single additional occupation can resolve the craft-sector boundary. The underlying problem is cross-classification: craft capability sits across occupations and industries because the sector is organised around material practice, production relationships and transmitted knowledge rather than one labour-market title. Relevant OSCA and ANZSIC classes need to be mapped to field of practice, production setting and employment form, supplemented by sector-specific evidence on teaching, transmission, enterprise and provenance.

OSCA reform can improve the visibility of individual occupations, while a parallel craft-sector crosswalk supplies the relational layer the national occupation system is not designed to provide. Together, these mechanisms would allow workforce statistics to remain compatible with Australia's standard classifications while making the wider productive and cultural system more measurable.





Silversmithing workshop, Ballarat | Image: Australian Centre for Rare Arts & Forgotten Trades

“Having an occupation classification that reflects the modern labour market supports efficient, accurate and informed decision-making by governments, industry and businesses.”

—Australian Statistician Dr David Gruen, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2024c

15

Geographical Indications and Australian Craft

“Specific protection of geographical indications is recognised so as to safeguard and develop cultural heritage in the agricultural and craft and industrial sectors.”

European Union, 2023
Regulation (EU) 2023/2411, Recital 7

15.1 GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

A geographical indication identifies a product as originating in a specific place where a quality, reputation or other characteristic is essentially attributable to that geographical origin. Protection is collective rather than proprietary in the ordinary brand sense. Producers within the defined area who comply with the applicable specification are entitled to use the protected name, while the right cannot be appropriated by one firm simply because it has greater market presence or longer commercial use (IP Australia, n.d.-a; European Union, 2023).

The product specification gives the right its substantive content. It identifies the name to be protected, the product, the geographical area, the relevant characteristics or reputation, the connection between those characteristics and place, and the production steps that must occur within the area. Depending on the product, it may also identify relevant raw materials, traditional methods, packaging requirements, labelling rules and procedures for demonstrating origin. The specification converts a geographical reputation into an assessable collective standard rather than leaving origin as a general marketing claim.

Protection extends beyond direct copying of the registered name. Under the European craft and industrial regime, a protected geographical indication can be enforced against misuse, imitation or evocation, including where the true origin is stated or the name is accompanied by terms such as style, type, method or imitation (European Union, 2023). The protected interest is the relationship between the registered name and qualifying production, not simply whether a consumer has been told where the imitation was actually made.

For craft, the mechanism is particularly relevant where a producer community has developed around a continuing relationship among place, materials, knowledge and production. The legal test nevertheless remains product- and place-specific. A concentration of practitioners or the presence of a local material does not alone establish a geographical indication. Producers must identify the qualifying product and demonstrate how its quality, reputation or other characteristic is attributable to the defined geographical origin.

Geographical indication, craftsmanship and provenance perform different but complementary functions. A geographical indication protects a qualifying collective name, with entitlement to use it governed by the applicable product specification. Craftsmanship concerns the standard demonstrated in making. Provenance records the connections among practitioner, capability, transmission, materials, process, place and product, together with the evidence supporting those connections. Maker identity remains separate unless the applicable specification makes particular forms of practitioner participation relevant to eligibility.

The application process consequently requires both evidence and collective organisation. Historical reputation, current production, geographical boundaries, production methods and authorised use must be capable of being documented and agreed. A craft geographical indication makes a demonstrable productive relationship between place and product capable of collective legal protection, rather than attaching a regional label to an object.

15.2 AUSTRALIAN GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

Australia's dedicated geographical-indication legislation currently applies to wine through the Wine Australia Act 2013 and associated regulations. The statutory system provides for registration of wine geographical indications and regulates their use in labelling and presentation. For claims concerning a single region, at least 85 per cent of the grapes must originate in the claimed geographical indication, illustrating the use of a defined evidentiary threshold within an established Australian origin regime (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013, 2018, reg 26).

Outside wine, certification trade marks provide the principal registered mechanism through which geographical origin can be protected for goods. Their rules may define the geographical area, production conditions, quality or other requirements and require approval by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission before IP Australia can register the certification trade mark. Collective trade marks perform a different function: they distinguish goods or services of members of an association but do not independently certify compliance with an origin specification (Commonwealth of Australia, 1995; ACCC, 2025).

Other legal mechanisms can also protect geographical reputation. Passing off and the Australian Consumer Law may address misleading representations, while ordinary trade marks may protect composite branding that incorporates a place name where registrability requirements are met. These mechanisms remain useful, but they do not create a single public register of non-wine geographical indications governed by one statutory origin regime. Producer groups must select among legal instruments according to the interest being protected.

Following the conclusion of Australia–European Union Free Trade Agreement negotiations on 24 March 2026, Australia has committed to developing a new geographical-indication system for agricultural goods and spirits, subject to domestic implementation and the agreement's entry into force (DFAT, 2026a, 2026b). The system would protect agreed European names and allow Australian and other applicants to seek protection for new geographical indications through an Australian examination and objection process (DFAT, 2026b). Australian applicants will first need domestic protection before a new Australian name can be proposed for reciprocal protection in the European Union.

Craft and industrial products are outside the negotiated agricultural and spirit list. Their position remains distinct from the new food-and-spirit system being developed. The immediate regulatory opportunity is that Australia is already creating administrative capacity for non-wine examination, objections, registration and enforcement. A future craft and industrial route could draw on that institutional capability while retaining the different eligibility tests required for non-food products.

The Australian question is consequently no longer whether collective origin can be recognised at all. Wine GIs, certification trade marks and collective trade marks already demonstrate different forms of shared legal interest, while the new non-wine system will add a dedicated agricultural and spirit pathway. The unresolved issue is whether Australian craft and industrial producer communities will have an equivalent statutory route through which documented product, place, reputation and production specifications can become a protected domestic right.

CASE STUDY 13
PROVOLONE VALPADANA
PROTECTED DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN (PDO) AND COLLECTIVE TRADE MARK

NORTHERN ITALY AND AUSTRALIA

Provolone Valpadana has been registered as a European Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) since 1996. Protection applies to the complete name Provolone Valpadana, while the word provolone was expressly excluded from protection on its own. The product specification links the cheese to a defined production area across northern Italy, together with specified ingredients, production methods and traceability requirements. The Consorzio Tutela Provolone Valpadana, a voluntary producer organisation established in 1975, represents producers within that system and undertakes activities concerned with protection, technical assistance, monitoring and promotion of the PDO (European Commission, 1996; Consorzio Tutela Provolone Valpadana, n.d.).

The consortium has also obtained protection in Australia through collective trade mark 2521424. The mark is a composite word-and-device mark incorporating the name Provolone Valpadana and is registered in Class 29 for “cheese compliant with the specifications of the Protected Designation of Origin Provolone Valpadana”. It is owned by the Consorzio Tutela Provolone Valpadana and connected to international registration 1838783. The Australian registration dates from 19 April 2024 and was entered on the register on 1 September 2025 (IP Australia, 2026c).

Under Part 15 of the Trade Marks Act 1995, a collective trade mark is owned by an association and used by its members to distinguish their goods or services from those of non-members. The mechanism allows a producer organisation to hold one shared registered right rather than requiring every producer to obtain an individual registration. In this case, the Australian goods description incorporates compliance with the existing European PDO specification, connecting the collective mark to an established system of product definition and producer participation (Commonwealth of Australia, 1995; IP Australia, 2026c; Zito, 2026).

The institutional structure existed before the Australian application. The Italian producers had already organised collectively, established a product specification and developed systems for membership, monitoring and representation. The Australian registration demonstrates that an organised producer group can carry a shared place-linked product identity into another jurisdiction through an available collective-right mechanism.

For Australian producer communities, Provolone Valpadana provides a practical precedent. A collective trade mark is legally distinct from a dedicated geographical indication and does not itself create the same place-based certification regime as a PDO. It nevertheless shows that effective origin protection depends on more than the legal instrument alone. Producer organisation, agreed standards, collective governance and a recognised applicant are the institutional foundations through which a shared product–place relationship can become a protected and administered right.



15.3 EUROPEAN CRAFT AND INDUSTRIAL PROTECTION

Regulation (EU) 2023/2411 created a European Union geographical-indication system specifically for craft and industrial products and became fully applicable on 1 December 2025. The Regulation defines craft and industrial products broadly enough to include both hand production and standardised or machine-assisted production, provided the applicable requirements are met. Eligible fields include natural stone, woodwork, jewellery, textiles, lace, cutlery, glass, porcelain, leather goods, musical instruments and furniture (European Union, 2023).

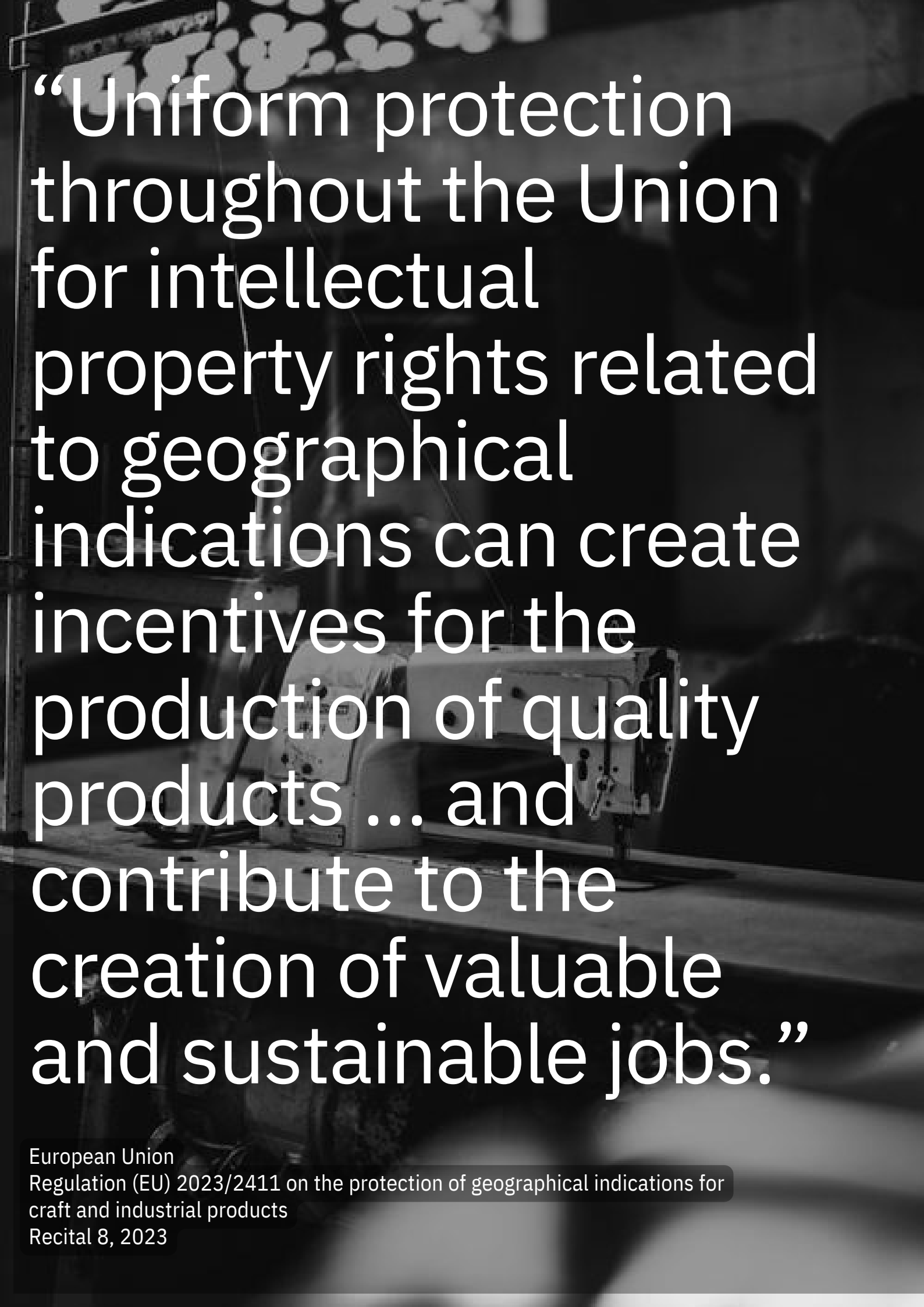
To qualify, a product must originate in a specific place, region or country; possess a quality, reputation or other characteristic essentially attributable to that geographical origin; and have at least one production step occurring within the defined area. The product specification must identify the protected name, product, geographical area, production methods and the evidence establishing the link between the product and place. It may also specify raw materials, packaging and labelling where these are relevant to the geographical relationship (European Union, 2023).

The standard registration pathway ordinarily begins before a national competent authority and proceeds to the European Union Intellectual Property Office for the Union phase. EUIPO (2026a) examines the application, conducts the Union-level opposition process and, where the requirements are satisfied, enters the name in the Union register. Seven Member States currently use a direct EUIPO procedure, while the remaining participating states operate a national phase before Union examination (EUIPO, 2026a).

Implementation has moved quickly. In an implementation update published on 17 July 2026, EUIPO (2026c) reported 81 applications from seven Member States and 20 registrations, with textiles the most represented field followed by stone products and ceramics. Porcelaine de Limoges was announced on 18 May 2026 as the first registered name under the new system, with further registrations following (EUIPO, 2026b, 2026c). Under Article 70, national specific protection is generally due to cease by 2 December 2026. Where a Member State makes the required request within the prescribed period, national protection may continue until the Union registration procedure is completed and the decision becomes final (European Union, 2023, art 70).

The Regulation gives producer communities a public legal mechanism through which local knowledge, established production and regional reputation can be expressed as a collectively governed product specification. It places craft and industrial origin within mainstream intellectual-property and market regulation rather than treating it solely as heritage designation or promotional branding.

The model also demonstrates that recognition does not depend on opposition between handcraft and industry. Serial production and machinery can fall within the regime where the product–place relationship satisfies the statutory test. For Australian craft, the relevant policy question is whether a demonstrable connection among product, production and place can be established, not whether the product conforms to a romantic definition of handmade work.



“Uniform protection throughout the Union for intellectual property rights related to geographical indications can create incentives for the production of quality products … and contribute to the creation of valuable and sustainable jobs.”

European Union
Regulation (EU) 2023/2411 on the protection of geographical indications for craft and industrial products
Recital 8, 2023



15.4 INTERNATIONAL REGISTRATION

International protection of a geographical indication depends first on the existence of a recognisable right in the country or territory of origin. Regulation (EU) 2023/2411 permits applications for craft and industrial geographical indications originating in third countries, but the applicant must provide the product specification and evidence that the geographical indication is protected in its country of origin (European Union, 2023, art 22). Australian producer communities require a domestic legal basis before the European Union procedure can provide an effective route to registration.

Australian certification trade marks can already protect geographical indications. Whether a particular registration supplies the legal proof required for a European craft and industrial GI application would need to be assessed against the protected right, product specification and applicable verification arrangements.

The requirement is more than procedural. Domestic protection establishes the applicant, the geographical area, the product specification and the collective entitlement that another jurisdiction is being asked to recognise. Provenance evidence may demonstrate the underlying relationship among materials, practitioners, production, knowledge and place, but it does not itself constitute the protected geographical right required by an overseas registration system.

The World Intellectual Property Organization's (2015) Lisbon System provides a second international mechanism. The Lisbon Agreement and its 2015 Geneva Act allow appellations of origin and geographical indications already protected in their contracting party of origin to be registered internationally through a single WIPO procedure. The Geneva Act extends the system to geographical indications as well as appellations of origin and can apply to agricultural, artisanal and industrial goods (WIPO, 2015). The European Union is a contracting party to the Geneva Act, allowing qualifying EU geographical indications to use that international architecture.

Australia is not presently a contracting party to the Lisbon System. Australian producers rely on domestic registration, bilateral or regional treaty arrangements and applications under the law of the destination market rather than a Lisbon international registration originating from Australia. Future accession would be a separate treaty-policy decision, but the existence of the system demonstrates the value of establishing a domestic geographical right that can interface with international protection mechanisms.

The provisional Australia–European Union Free Trade Agreement text provides for a bilateral route for agricultural and spirit geographical indications, subject to entry into force and implementation. Once a new Australian name is protected domestically, the agreement allows Australia to propose it for protection in the European market (DFAT, 2026b). Craft and industrial products fall outside that negotiated list, making the direct third-country procedure under the European CIGI Regulation the more relevant European route for those goods.

International registration begins with domestic institutional readiness. Producer organisation, an agreed specification, reliable evidence and a recognised Australian right must exist before overseas systems can protect the same collective interest. A dedicated Australian craft and industrial GI regime could provide a clearer and more accessible basis for international applications. Existing certification trade marks may already provide the required domestic protection in particular cases, subject to their scope, rules and the destination system's requirements.

15.5 PRODUCT FIELDS

The European craft and industrial geographical-indication regime covers product fields with direct Australian counterparts. Current applications and registrations include textiles, ceramics, jewellery, stone products, glass and other manufactured goods, while the Regulation expressly accommodates woodwork, leather, cutlery, furniture and musical instruments (European Union, 2023; EUIPO, 2026c). These categories overlap closely with the material fields in which Australian craft production, specialist workshops and regional knowledge are already distributed.

Eligibility is nevertheless determined at product level rather than by material sector. Australian wool, timber, stone, clay, leather or fibre can contribute to a credible geographical relationship, but the material alone does not create the right. The applicant must identify a product, define the relevant area, establish a quality, reputation or other characteristic attributable to that geographical origin and show that at least one production step occurs there. The protected interest attaches to a geographically constituted product rather than to a raw material or broad national category.

Broad descriptions such as Australian ceramics, Australian wool products or Australian furniture do not, by themselves, establish geographical-indication eligibility. A country may constitute the defined geographical area, but the applicant must still identify the particular product, substantiate the required geographical connection and specify the production steps undertaken within that area. A credible candidate is more likely to emerge from an established regional product name, a recognised production concentration, a distinctive local method or a historical reputation that remains connected to current production.

Evidence must also follow the productive relationship. Relevant records may include historical trade use of the name, workshop and producer locations, material sources, production stages, technical methods, sales and exhibition history, archival references and evidence of market reputation. Provenance records can support this work by connecting products to makers, processes, materials and place, while the GI application determines which of those relationships are legally relevant to the protected specification.

The European Union's preparatory mapping demonstrates the value of screening product fields before applications are filed. It combined analysis of existing national rights with identification of names that might warrant further producer and institutional investigation (EUIPO, 2024). The method separates sector visibility from legal eligibility: mapping identifies where a candidate relationship may exist, while the application process establishes whether the statutory requirements are actually met.

An Australian product-field assessment should perform the same preparatory function. Regional names and production concentrations can be screened against evidence of current producers, historical use, place-linked reputation, production steps and collective capacity. The assessment should also identify whether the relevant knowledge and production remain active and whether there are sufficient producers to organise collectively. This would distinguish products that are ready for specification development from those requiring further research or producer organisation, and would direct technical assistance towards identifiable opportunities rather than treating every regional craft practice as a prospective geographical indication.





15.6 NATIONAL COORDINATION

Geographical indications require coordination because no single participant ordinarily holds all of the evidence, technical knowledge and legal authority required to create and maintain the right. Producer groups know the product and production history; regional and heritage records may hold evidence of reputation; technical specialists can assist with specifications and controls; intellectual-property authorities examine legal eligibility; and trade agencies become relevant when protection is sought overseas. Coordination brings these functions together without transferring the producer community's collective interest to an administrative body.

The producer group remains central. Earlier organisation is required to identify the product, agree the geographical area, establish which production steps and characteristics define eligibility and determine how producers can enter and remain within the system. The European CIGI Regulation formalises this role by making producer groups the ordinary applicants and assigning them continuing responsibilities after registration, including supporting compliance, protecting the name and developing the performance of the geographical indication (European Union, 2023).

A national coordinating function performs a different task. It can identify prospective producer communities, explain the evidentiary threshold, connect groups with legal and technical expertise, support historical and market research, assist with specification drafting and direct applications to the appropriate public authority. It can also maintain consistent guidance across ceramics, textiles, food, timber, stone and other fields while recognising that each product requires its own evidence and production controls.

International systems show that these functions can be separated. Japan's Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries works alongside the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry to support designated industries, public information and market development. The Harris Tweed Authority combines statutory inspection, certification and enforcement within a product-specific system. In the European Union, national competent authorities and EUIPO perform formal registration functions while producer groups retain responsibility for the underlying collective product (Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries, n.d., 2026a; Harris Tweed Authority, 2025; EUIPO, 2026a).

For Australia, IP Australia can perform functions assigned to it by legislation, while DFAT manages treaty and international market-access questions. Neither agency substitutes for the work required before an application exists. Regional authorities, industry organisations, First Nations bodies, historians, technical experts and producer groups may each hold part of the necessary evidence or authority.

A nationally recognised coordination mechanism would operate between mapping and formal registration. Its purpose would be to turn identifiable regional production into application-ready collective organisation while leaving legal decisions with the designated statutory authority. Governance should include producers, First Nations representatives, technical experts, regions and relevant public agencies. Success would be measured through functioning producer groups, credible specifications and maintained rights rather than by the number of promotional regional labels created.

Implementation support should extend beyond formal examination. The European Union Intellectual Property Office's (2026d) SME Fund introduced a dedicated craft and industrial geographical-indication voucher reimbursing up to 50 per cent of eligible application and product-specification preparation costs, to a maximum of €2,000 per beneficiary, for eligible EU-based applicants. Applicant guidance, training and technical assistance similarly form part of the implementation environment. Producer organisation and specification development are recognised administrative costs rather than functions that can be assumed to arise unaided within small producer communities (EUIPO, 2026d).

15.7 NATIONAL DIRECTORY



A national directory would identify place-based craft and industrial production before a geographical-indication application is filed. Its purpose is preparatory rather than determinative. Inclusion would not confer a legal right or certify that a product meets the statutory GI test. It would establish where there is sufficient evidence of a regional product, producer community or production history to justify further investigation and collective development.

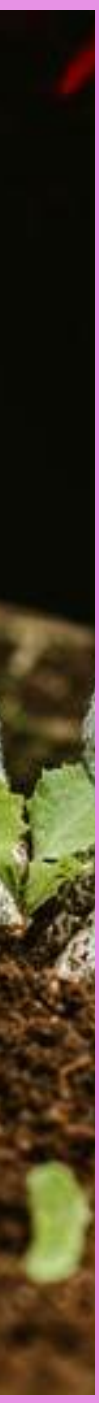
The directory should record the product name, geographical area, known producers or producer group, material field, relevant production stages, historical evidence, documented reputation, current market presence and existing forms of legal protection. It should also identify whether a specification exists, whether producers have begun collective organisation and which evidentiary gaps remain. These fields make the directory materially different from a business listing or tourism database because the unit of interest is the relationship among product, place and productive community.

The European Union's preparatory work demonstrates this function at scale. EUIPO's (2024) study mapped national legal frameworks, 132 existing or pending national craft and industrial geographical indications and 380 product names with potential for future protection. The study explicitly did not determine that the listed products qualified for registration; it made the field visible so that public authorities and producer groups could prepare for the new regime (EUIPO, 2024). For an Australian directory, the same approach would support early identification and evidence building while leaving formal examination to the appropriate authority.

Murano glass provides a regional example of how a known product can be organised around identifiable authorised production. The Veneto collective mark administered by Consorzio Promovetro Murano is licensed to qualifying enterprises within the defined area, while numbered labels connect certified objects to authorised producers (Consorzio Promovetro Murano, n.d.). Australian guilds, heritage registers, regional bodies, museums, archives and provenance records already contain comparable fragments of product, producer and place evidence that could be assembled around candidate relationships.

A directory must also preserve differences in cultural authority. First Nations names, products and cultural knowledge should not be entered or published merely because a researcher identifies a potential geographical association. Inclusion of culturally governed material requires the authority of the relevant First Nations knowledge holders and controls over what information may be disclosed.

The directory would provide a national development pipeline rather than a register of approved rights. Candidate products could be classified according to evidentiary readiness: documented regional production, emerging producer organisation, specification under development or legally protected GI. This would allow technical assistance, regional research and producer-group development to be directed where a credible collective right may exist and would make the progression from place-based production to formal application visible.



15.8 FOOD GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

Agricultural and food geographical indications operate through a different European legal regime from craft and industrial products, but they demonstrate how place-based production can be structured as a collective economic right. For agricultural products, Protected Designation of Origin requires qualities or characteristics essentially or exclusively attributable to the geographical environment, including its natural and human factors, and generally requires all production steps to occur within the defined area. Protected Geographical Indication requires a quality, reputation or other characteristic essentially attributable to geographical origin and at least one production step within that area (European Union, 2024a, art 46).

Traditional Speciality Guaranteed is a separate quality scheme protecting qualifying traditional composition or production methods without requiring a particular geographical origin (European Union, 2024a).

These categories separate three propositions that are often conflated in artisan food markets: where the ingredients originate, where the transformation occurs and whether the method itself is traditional. A cheesemaker can reproduce a learned technique outside the place protected by a geographical indication, while the protected geographical name remains reserved for producers meeting the registered territorial specification. The legal right concerns the defined relationship between product and place rather than ownership of the underlying craft knowledge.

Italy demonstrates the economic scale that can develop around mature origin systems. The Ismea-Qualivita (2025) report records €20.7 billion in production value for Italian protected food and wine products in 2024 and €12.3 billion in exports. The wider GI system involved 328 authorised protection consortia and approximately 184,000 operators across food, wine and spirits (Ismea-Qualivita, 2025). A network of specifications, producer organisations and controls enables collective reputation to be administered over time.

Australia is developing a new non-wine geographical-indication system following the conclusion of Australia–European Union Free Trade Agreement negotiations; the registration pathway remains subject to domestic implementation (DFAT, 2026b). The new system will allow Australian applicants to seek domestic protection through an examination and objection process and, once protected, to pursue reciprocal protection in the European market (DFAT, 2026b). This creates an immediate producer-readiness task for Australian artisan food and spirit communities ahead of the new registration pathway.

The economic base is substantial. Victoria alone exported $22.1 billion in food and fibre in 2024–25, including $2.8 billion in dairy, $1.4 billion in prepared foods and beverages and $1.9 billion in horticulture (Global Victoria, 2026). These figures do not identify GI candidates by themselves; they show the scale of regional production within which place-linked products and producer communities may be found.

The immediate task is identification and organisation. Regional food names, historical production areas, current producer concentrations, materials, methods and market reputation need to be recorded before a credible specification can be developed. Artisan food provides Australia’s first new field for building that institutional capability, with lessons directly relevant to later craft and industrial origin protection.

15.9 INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

An Australian craft and industrial geographical-indication system requires connected legal, evidentiary and administrative functions. The first is a recognised applicant. Producer groups should ordinarily hold the collective interest because the right concerns a product community rather than one trader, while defined exceptions may be needed where only one qualifying producer remains or where a public or regional entity is authorised to act during establishment. Applicant rules must allow genuine producer access and prevent a dominant firm from converting a regional name into a closed private asset.

The second requirement is the product specification. It must define the protected name, geographical area, product, relevant materials where necessary, production methods, place-linked quality, reputation or other characteristic, and the production steps that must occur within the area. It should also state how origin and compliance will be demonstrated. The specification is the central legal document because it determines both who may use the name and what must remain true for the right to retain credibility.

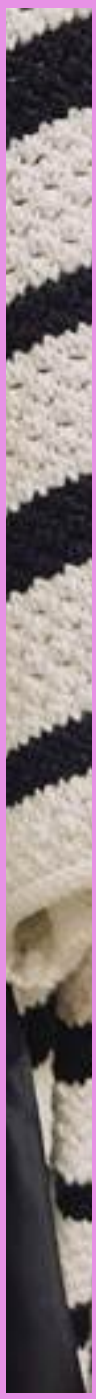
The third function is examination and opposition. A designated public authority must assess whether the statutory test is met, whether the proposed name conflicts with prior rights or generic use, whether the geographical relationship is supported by evidence and whether the specification treats eligible producers fairly. An opposition process allows affected producers, rights holders and other parties to raise relevant conflicts before registration. Decisions require reasons, review rights and a transparent public record.

The fourth function is continuing control. Registration must be supported by procedures for verifying compliance, approving amendments, identifying authorised producers, addressing misuse and, where necessary, cancelling protection. The European CIGI regime combines producer responsibilities with competent-authority controls and market monitoring, including electronic commerce (European Union, 2023; EUIPO, 2026a). A geographical indication has little value if the specification cannot be maintained or unauthorised use cannot be addressed.

Australian institutional design must also accommodate federal responsibilities and existing trade mark, consumer, wine, food and heritage law. First Nations names, cultural expressions, traditional products and associated knowledge require First Nations authority throughout identification, application, disclosure and use, including free, prior and informed consent where registration or publication would engage culturally governed material. A registration procedure cannot create authority to disclose or commercialise knowledge that an applicant does not hold.

Small producer groups will require technical assistance with historical evidence, mapping, specification drafting, governance and compliance. Assistance should reduce administrative barriers without reducing the evidentiary threshold. A workable system combines accessible development support with independent legal examination. Its integrity depends on producers being able to organise and use the right, competitors being able to understand its boundaries, and consumers being able to rely on the protected name as evidence of the registered product–place relationship.





15.10 AUSTRALIAN CRAFT AND PROVENANCE BILL

The proposed Australian Craft and Provenance Bill would provide statutory recognition for the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector and establish an institutional framework connecting practitioner recognition, transmission, provenance and product-origin rights. No Commonwealth instrument by this name currently exists. The proposal is a legislative architecture arising from the identified gaps rather than a description of current law.

Part A would address people, capability and transmission. It could establish nationally recognised practitioner and atelier categories, provide the statutory basis for field-specific assessment and advanced-practice recognition, and recognise approved settings through which specialist capability is transmitted. Its purpose would not be to license every person making craft, but to create identifiable standards and records where public recognition, certification, procurement, workforce development or transmission support requires them.

Part B would address products, provenance and collective origin. It could provide governance principles for a national provenance registry, recognise the separation between practitioner identity and product certification, establish a national directory of potential place-based products and create the statutory route for craft and industrial geographical indications. Product-origin rights would require producer-group governance, specifications, examination, opposition, compliance controls and enforcement rather than being conferred through practitioner status alone.

The legislation should establish public functions, standards and safeguards rather than grant statutory control to an existing private organisation. Government consultation and drafting would determine the administering authorities, constitutional basis, interaction with state and territory law, delegation of assessment functions, review rights, offences and enforcement. Industry bodies, producer groups and specialist assessors may perform recognised roles within the system without owning the statutory framework.

First Nations cultural authority requires separate and explicit protection. A registry or geographical-indication application must not create a right to record, disclose or commercialise names, knowledge, designs, methods or cultural meanings without the authority of the relevant First Nations knowledge holders. Governance should provide for refusal, restricted access or other protective treatment where ordinary publication and registration procedures would conflict with cultural authority.

Digital architecture should allow practitioner, product, certification and geographical-origin records to interoperate without collapsing them into one claim. Persistent identifiers and structured evidence can support procurement, export documentation and future Digital Product Passport requirements while preserving culturally restricted, personal and commercially sensitive information under appropriate access controls.

The proposed Bill performs an integrating function. German vocational responsibility, Japanese product designation, Harris Tweed's statutory producer system and the European Union's geographical-indication architecture demonstrate different mechanisms through which people, production and place receive institutional recognition (BIBB, 2013; Government of Japan, 1974; Harris Tweed Authority, 2025; European Union, 2023). Australian legislation would need to adapt those functions to a federal system, a dispersed micro-enterprise workforce, First Nations rights and contemporary digital trade rather than reproduce any one international model.



Vintage Australian Esky coolers | Image: Samantha Gordon, PropCo

CASE STUDY 14

SHE'LL BE RIGHT, MATE (until it wasn't)

UGG, BLUNDSTONE, ESKY AND SPEEDO
WHAT AUSTRALIA LOSES WHEN PRODUCT IDENTITY IS SEPARATED FROM AUSTRALIAN PROVENANCE

Ugg boots, Blundstone, Esky and Speedo are all strongly associated with Australian product history, yet their names, ownership and production have followed very different paths. Together they expose a central weakness in the way Australian product identity has historically been protected: trade marks can preserve and transfer commercial brands, but they do not necessarily preserve the relationship between a product and Australian place, production, workforce or skilled capability.

A geographical indication operates differently. Where a qualifying product name is collectively protected through a defined geographical specification, the right remains attached to the relationship between the product and its place of origin rather than travelling simply with ownership of a business or brand. Had comparable place-based rights been available, organised and established around qualifying Australian products before their production systems changed, an Australian geographical identity could have remained legally connected to Australian production even if individual companies were subsequently sold, acquired or moved manufacturing offshore.

These four histories do not suggest that every Australian brand could or should have become a geographical indication. Esky and Speedo are invented commercial brands; Blundstone is a company name; and ugg has developed as a generic product term in Australia. Rather, they demonstrate what can happen when Australian provenance is carried principally through private brand identity and cultural memory instead of through a separately documented and, where eligible, collectively protected relationship between product and place.



Australian Ugg boots

In Australia, ugg, ug and ugh have long been used by multiple producers as names for a type of sheepskin boot. Shane Stedman registered UGH-BOOTS in Australia in 1971 and UGH in 1982, and Deckers Outdoor Corporation later acquired the registrations. In 2006, the Australian Trade Marks Office ordered the UGH-BOOTS registration removed for non-use. Evidence before the delegate demonstrated extensive interchangeable use of UGH BOOT, UG BOOT and UGG BOOT as names for the product type in Australia (Deckers Outdoor Corporation v B&B McDougal [2006] ATMO 5).

The legal position developed differently in the United States because trade mark rights are territorial and consumer understanding is assessed within the relevant market. Australian entrepreneur Brian Smith began distributing Australian-made sheepskin boots in the United States in 1979. Deckers later acquired the UGG business and associated trade marks. In litigation against Australian Leather, the United States District Court rejected the argument that Australian generic use established generic meaning in the American market. A 2017 survey commissioned by Deckers found that 98 per cent of 600 United States women aged 16–54, selected because they had recently purchased or anticipated purchasing boots or casual shoes, understood UGG as a brand name (Deckers Outdoor Corporation v Australian Leather Pty Ltd, 2018, pp. 11–12). The judgment was affirmed on appeal in 2021 (Deckers Outdoor Corporation v Australian Leather Pty Ltd, 2021).

UGG Since 1974 (n.d.) illustrates the continuing effect on Australian producers. It is a third-generation Australian business that continues to manufacture sheepskin boots in its Queensland workshop. The company trades under UGG Since 1974 in Australia and New Zealand but uses Since 74 in other markets where existing UGG trade mark rights affect use of the term. Productive lineage, workshop knowledge and Australian manufacture can continue even where the familiar Australian product term cannot accompany the goods into every export market (UGG Since 1974, n.d.).

The case demonstrates the difference between a product tradition and a trade mark. A trade mark determines who may use a particular commercial sign in a particular market; provenance can record who made an individual pair of boots, where it was made, the origin of its materials and the workshop and processes involved. A geographical indication would perform another function again. The generic term ugg would not itself establish a GI, but an organised producer community with a qualifying geographical name, agreed specification and demonstrable relationship between product and place could potentially have created a separate collective right. The history illustrates why producer organisation and place-based evidence need to be developed before a shared Australian production tradition becomes commercially defined elsewhere.



Blundstone

Blundstone developed from nineteenth-century footwear manufacture in Hobart and remains a privately owned Tasmanian family company. Its reputation emerged from a local production system involving footwear design, leather selection, pattern cutting, lasting, sole construction and factory labour. The elastic-sided boots associated with the company developed within that Tasmanian manufacturing base and subsequently became an internationally recognised product line (Blundstone, n.d.-b).

Blundstone (n.d.-a) states that its leather footwear is manufactured overseas, while its gumboots are manufactured at its Hobart headquarters. The company retains its Tasmanian ownership, headquarters and research and design functions (Blundstone, n.d.-a).

The result cannot accurately be described either as wholly Australian manufacture or as the complete disappearance of Australian productive capability. Tasmanian ownership, design, management and gumboot manufacture continue, while the manufacturing chain for most leather footwear operates internationally. Different capabilities within the same company now have different geographical histories.

The Blundstone trade mark preserves the commercial identity and Tasmanian history of the business. It does not, however, require every product carrying the mark to be made in Tasmania, nor does it identify which production stages occurred there. Product-level provenance can answer that question by documenting the places in which a model was designed, cut, stitched, lasted, soled, finished and inspected, together with the materials and enterprises involved.

A geographical indication would not have prevented Blundstone as a company from moving manufacturing or sourcing internationally. A qualifying GI or craft and industrial geographical indication could, however, have protected a separately defined Tasmanian product identity if producers had established an eligible place-linked name and specification. Products could continue to use the protected name only while complying with the specification, including its requirements concerning production within the defined area. The case demonstrates the difference between retaining an Australian-owned brand and retaining an Australian place-based manufacturing right.

Esky



Esky originated in a Sydney sheet-metal business established by Francis Malley in 1884. Malley's released the Esky Auto Ice Box in 1952 as a portable cooler for motor vehicles. The early product combined a sheet-metal body, cork insulation and removable storage trays, linking industrial fabrication with the expansion of Australian car travel, camping and outdoor recreation. The Esky name was registered as a trade mark in 1961. Nylex assumed manufacture in 1984 and developed plastic forms of the product, changing both the materials used and the productive capability involved (Powerhouse, n.d.-a; Esky, n.d.).

The brand subsequently passed through several corporate owners. Coleman Australia acquired Esky in 2009 under Jarden Corporation, and the brand became part of Newell Brands following the merger of Newell and Jarden. At the same time, esky became widely embedded in Australian speech as a common term for a portable cooler. Cultural familiarity with the word as an Australian product category exists alongside continuing private trade mark rights in Esky as a commercial brand (Powerhouse, n.d.-a; Esky, n.d.).

Corporate history records the transfer of the brand from Malley's through Nylex, Coleman, Jarden and Newell. It does not by itself identify where a particular contemporary cooler was designed, moulded, assembled or inspected, which materials were used or which production facilities supplied it. The continued existence of an Australian-origin brand cannot establish the production provenance of an individual contemporary product.

Esky is an invented commercial name rather than an inherently geographical designation, so a craft and industrial geographical indication would not ordinarily replace the trade mark protecting the brand itself. The potential GI question is whether a distinctive Australian or regional cooler-manufacturing tradition, supported by a qualifying geographical name, producer community and production specification, could have been separately identified and protected while that manufacturing capability remained active.

Historical provenance now performs part of that work retrospectively. Surviving Malley's products, technical records and museum collections preserve evidence of Australian sheet-metal fabrication, insulation systems, industrial design and later plastics manufacture. Esky demonstrates how an object can remain culturally Australian even after ownership and production relationships have changed. A protected place-based right, where legally available and established in time, could have preserved a distinct Australian production identity separately from the transferable commercial brand.

Speedo

Speedo developed from the knitting business established by Alexander MacRae in Sydney in 1914. The Racerback swimsuit and Speedo name appeared in 1928. The Racerback applied textile knowledge, pattern cutting and garment construction to the practical problem of reducing restriction in competitive swimming. Australian production subsequently developed through experimentation with knitted structures, synthetic fibres, garment fit and hydrodynamic performance (Speedo Australia, n.d.; Pentland Group, n.d.).

The Powerhouse collection preserves substantial evidence of the people and processes behind this development. Its Speedo holdings include garments, patterns, catalogues, technical documentation and material relating to Australian design and manufacture. The archive also records the contribution of designer and product manager Gloria Smythe, whose work from the 1950s incorporated new fibres and construction approaches into competitive and leisure swimwear. Speedo's Australian significance arose not simply from the creation of a successful brand but from accumulated textile, design and manufacturing capability (Powerhouse, n.d.-b).

The UK-based Pentland Group acquired the Speedo International licence and Speedo Australia's manufacturing and distribution interests in 1990. Australian manufacturing continued for a further period, but garment production ended in 2001 when manufacturing was transferred to Speedo International factories. The Windsor site remained at that time as a marketing and distribution facility and a design centre for leisurewear (Powerhouse, n.d.-b; Pentland Group, n.d.).

Speedo's Australian origin continues to form part of the international brand narrative, while the Powerhouse archive preserves documentary evidence of the earlier Australian production system. These are different forms of continuity. Brand heritage can survive corporate acquisition; archival heritage can preserve knowledge of past production; neither means that the workforce, machinery, suppliers and manufacturing relationships responsible for earlier Australian production remain operational.

As with Esky, the Speedo name itself is an invented private brand rather than a geographical designation. A CIGI could not simply have prevented sale of the company or movement of the trade mark. Had an eligible Australian textile or swimwear production community developed a qualifying regional product identity and specification, however, that place-based right could have remained attached to Australian manufacture even after ownership of individual companies changed. The Speedo history demonstrates why valuable productive knowledge should be identified and, where appropriate, collectively protected before the production system through which it developed disappears.



Comparative significance

The four cases describe different relationships among product name, brand, ownership, manufacture and place. Ugg concerns an Australian product term whose trade mark treatment differs between jurisdictions. Blundstone retains Australian ownership, design activity and some manufacturing while most leather-footwear production now occurs internationally. Esky is an invented Australian brand that entered vernacular culture and passed through successive corporate owners. Speedo retains a powerful Australian origin story after foreign acquisition and the end of Australian garment manufacture.

Their common feature is the persistence of Australian commercial or cultural identity after changes to the productive relationships beneath it. A brand can remain recognisably Australian while manufacturing moves. A shared Australian product term can become commercially controlled in another market. Design and management may remain in Australia while physical production occurs elsewhere. Museums and archives can preserve evidence of a productive capability after the workforce and infrastructure that created it have dispersed.



A geographical indication works differently from an ordinary trade mark. An ordinary trade mark is an asset that can be assigned, licensed or acquired. A geographical indication is attached to a qualifying relationship between product and place and is available to producers who satisfy the collective specification. Where a craft and industrial geographical indication is established, ownership of an individual business can change without transferring the geographical right to production occurring elsewhere. The protected place-linked identity remains with qualifying production in the defined region.

These histories do not mean that Ugg, Blundstone, Esky or Speedo could simply have been converted into geographical indications. They demonstrate instead why Australia needs to identify product–place relationships before they are lost. Where a region contains a producer community, accumulated skill, reputation, materials or production methods capable of satisfying a geographical-indication test, those relationships need to be documented, organised and assessed while the productive system still exists. Otherwise, the commercially recognisable name may survive while the Australian production relationship that gave it meaning becomes progressively harder to identify.

Craftsmanship and provenance perform complementary functions. Craftsmanship concerns the quality with which learned capability and consequential judgement are exercised at defined stages. Provenance records who performed those stages, where they occurred, which materials and methods were used and how the product moved through production and custody. A geographical indication protects an eligible collective relationship between product and place. A trade mark identifies commercial source.

Taken together, these histories demonstrate why Australian brand identity, ownership, manufacturing location and product provenance must be documented separately. A geographical indication cannot prevent a company being sold or a factory closing, but where the statutory criteria are met it can prevent a protected Australian place-based identity from simply travelling with production that has left that place. Provenance then records the makers, materials, processes and skills through which the product was actually produced. The policy opportunity is to identify significant Australian product–place relationships while the producers, knowledge and infrastructure still exist, organise those producer communities and protect eligible geographical identities before the connection between an Australian name and Australian making becomes historical rather than productive.

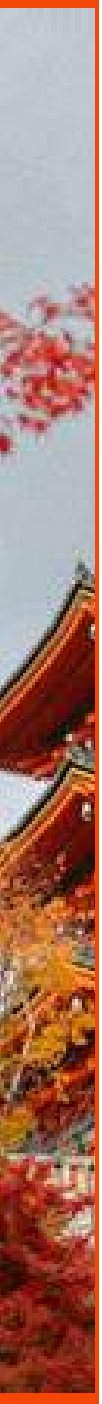
16

Comparative Recognition Models

“A GI also strengthens collaboration among producers to uphold quality standards and preserve traditional skills.”

European Commission, n.d.
Geographical indications for craft and industrial products

16.1 JAPAN



Japan provides a useful example of institutional separation between productive-industry recognition, cultural-technique recognition and practitioner recognition. Traditional craft industries are supported through the Act on the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries 1974, administered by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). Designation applies to qualifying traditional craft products and production regions. Practitioner recognition also operates within the traditional craft industry framework through the Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries' Dento Kogeishi certification, while recognition of holders of Important Intangible Cultural Properties operates through separate cultural-property legislation (Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries, 2026a; Agency for Cultural Affairs, n.d.).

Under the Act, designated crafts must be used principally in everyday life, have major production processes undertaken by hand, use traditional techniques or methods and traditional principal materials, and retain a sufficiently established regional production base. METI guidance interprets "traditional" techniques and materials as, in principle, having been continuously used for at least 100 years (Government of Japan, 1974; METI, 2026a).

Following the designation of Tokyo Tebori Insho in October 2025, METI recorded 244 nationally designated traditional crafts. Designation enables producer associations and other eligible organisations to access support for successor development, demand cultivation and regional industry development through approved promotion plans and dedicated traditional-craft-industry assistance (METI, 2025, 2026b).

Cultural recognition operates through a separate legal architecture under the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties 1950. Important Intangible Cultural Properties may include craft techniques, while individuals or groups demonstrating advanced mastery may be recognised as holders. Recognition can be individual, collective or group-based, and recognised individual holders receive annual support alongside programs for successor training and transmission (Agency for Cultural Affairs, n.d.).

The Japanese model distinguishes the productive tradition, the cultural technique and the practitioner who embodies it. Product designation supports the continuity and market conditions of a regional industry; recognition of an intangible cultural property safeguards the technique; and holder recognition acknowledges the practitioner or group carrying that capability.

Japan illustrates the value of separating product and place recognition, practitioner recognition, craftsmanship assessment and transmission within a connected system. Product and place recognition, practitioner recognition, craftsmanship assessment, transmission and market development can reinforce one another while retaining different legal, evidentiary and administrative purposes.

16.2 GERMANY

Germany provides a strong example of craft recognised as an economic, occupational, enterprise and training system. The Handwerksordnung (Crafts and Trades Regulation Code) provides the statutory framework for craft-enterprise registration, vocational training, examinations, professional advancement and the organisation of Chambers of Crafts. Skilled making is institutionally located within workforce and economic regulation, supported by durable legal, representative and training infrastructure (Federal Republic of Germany, 1953).

The system distinguishes crafts subject to authorisation from non-regulated crafts and craft-like trades while maintaining a broad recognised field of skilled occupations. These include building and construction trades, food production, textiles, footwear, jewellery, ceramics, woodwork, musical-instrument making and other material occupations listed under the Handwerksordnung (Federal Republic of Germany, 1953).

Advanced progression is structured through the Meister qualification. The Meister examination comprises four components: specialist practical capability; specialist theory; business, commercial and legal capability; and vocational and workplace pedagogy (Federal Republic of Germany, 2011, 2022). The qualification connects advanced technical practice with enterprise leadership and responsibility for training future practitioners. Holders of the relevant Meister qualification are also entitled to use the additional designation Bachelor Professional, making advanced vocational progression visible within the formal qualifications architecture (Federal Republic of Germany, 1953, as amended, §§45 and 51).

Germany's 53 Chambers of Crafts provide regional statutory representation and institutional infrastructure across the country. Around 600 craft vocational training centres support practical training, advanced qualifications and knowledge and technology transfer, including the Meister pathway. Advanced vocational training is further supported through Aufstiegs-BAföG, which contributes to course and examination costs and can support Meister examination projects and living costs for eligible participants (ZDH, n.d.-a, n.d.-b; BMBFSFJ, n.d.).

The German model connects occupation, practitioner progression, enterprise, workplace learning, regional representation and transmission responsibility within one recognised productive field. Registers establish institutional visibility; Chambers provide durable representation and services; training centres maintain practical infrastructure; and Meister progression connects advanced capability with enterprise and teaching responsibility.

Germany shows how craft-trade recognition can operate as workforce and industry infrastructure as well as cultural recognition. Occupational visibility, advanced practitioner progression, enterprise support, representative institutions, training infrastructure and responsibility for transmission can operate as mutually reinforcing parts of a national craft-trade system.



16.3 ITALY



Italy provides a useful example of artisan production recognised as a distinct economic and enterprise form. Framework Law No. 443 of 1985 defines the imprenditore artigiano, or artisan entrepreneur, and the impresa artigiana, or artisan enterprise, as statutory categories (Republic of Italy, 1985). An artisan entrepreneur must exercise the enterprise personally and professionally, assume responsibility for its management and contribute predominantly through their own work, including manual work, within the production process. Regional governments develop artisan policy within this national framework, including enterprise development, training, applied research, access to finance, export support and the promotion of territorial, artistic and traditional production (Republic of Italy, 1985).

The framework places practitioner participation within the legal identity of the enterprise. Artisan status gives practitioner-led production administrative and economic visibility while allowing other forms of recognition to address advanced capability, transmission and product–place relationships.

Regional systems can extend this architecture into advanced practitioner recognition. Veneto, for example, recognises the Maestro Artigiano as an experienced artisan entrepreneur with advanced professional and managerial capability and an aptitude for teaching the craft. Its legislation also recognises botteghe scuola—workshops through which master artisans transmit knowledge and skills to future practitioners (Regione del Veneto, 2026).

Italy has further strengthened the relationship between artisan production, territorial identity and market recognition through Law No. 206 of 2023 on the promotion and protection of Made in Italy. The legislation supports producer associations and the preparation of production specifications for typical craft and industrial products, complementing the European Union geographical-indication system established by Regulation (EU) 2023/2411 (Republic of Italy, 2023; European Union, 2023). The Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy (MIMIT) now maintains a dedicated function for the national phase of craft and industrial GI registration and liaison with EUIPO (MIMIT, 2026a).

The Italian model connects practitioner-led enterprise, regional development, advanced practitioner recognition, transmission and place-based product protection through complementary mechanisms.

Italy offers a precedent for formally recognising practitioner-led production as an economic form in its own right. Enterprise recognition, advanced practitioner status, transmission, regional development and geographical-origin protection can operate as connected elements of a wider craft-trade system, giving micro-enterprises and skilled producers greater institutional visibility.

16.4 UNITED KINGDOM

The United Kingdom provides a distinctive example of statutory product and place recognition through the Harris Tweed system. The Harris Tweed Act 1993 defines Harris Tweed as cloth handwoven by islanders at their homes in the Outer Hebrides, finished in the Outer Hebrides and made from pure virgin wool dyed and spun there. The Act established the Harris Tweed Authority as the statutory body responsible for safeguarding the definition, maintaining the integrity of the Harris Tweed trade marks and protecting the industry (Harris Tweed Act 1993).

The statutory framework developed from earlier collective industry governance. The Harris Tweed Association was established in 1909 and registered the Orb certification mark in 1910, with stamping commencing in 1911. The 1993 legislation subsequently established the Harris Tweed Authority and placed the product definition within statute. Today, cloth is inspected by an independent Authority inspector before the Orb certification mark is applied, providing a visible assurance that the statutory production requirements have been met (Harris Tweed Authority, n.d.-a, n.d.-b).

The model is particularly significant because productive responsibility is distributed across a connected regional production system. Island mills undertake processes including dyeing, blending, carding, spinning, warping and finishing, while registered islanders weave the cloth at home on treadle looms. Mills and independent weavers remain distinct productive actors within a shared statutory product identity, with the legal definition preserving the relationship among material, process, producer and place (Harris Tweed Authority, n.d.-c).

The industry's economic contribution has been estimated through a commissioned socio-economic assessment. BiGGAR Economics (2026) estimated that Harris Tweed supported £16.8 million in gross value added and 520 jobs across Scotland in 2024, including £11.0 million in GVA and 370 jobs in the Outer Hebrides. These totals include direct, indirect and induced impacts, with employment measured as headcount jobs supported (BiGGAR Economics, 2026).

The Harris Tweed model connects statutory definition, place, material, production process, independent producers, inspection and collective market identity within a durable recognition system.

Harris Tweed shows how a qualifying product–place relationship can be protected through defined production specifications and collective governance while preserving producers' separate identities. This provides a strong precedent for place-based craft and industrial recognition built around verifiable provenance and distributed regional production.





16.5 EUROPEAN UNION



Eligibility requires a product to originate in a defined place, possess a quality, reputation or other characteristic essentially attributable to that geographical origin, and have at least one production step occurring within the area (European Union, 2023, art 6). The regime applies across fields including textiles, ceramics, glass, jewellery, stone, wood, leather, cutlery, furniture and musical instruments. It does not require exclusive hand production.

Registration normally follows a two-phase procedure. A producer group develops the application and product specification, the national competent authority undertakes the national phase, and EUIPO conducts the Union-level phase leading to EU-wide registration. The specification records the product, geographical area, production methods, relevant production stages and the evidence linking its quality, reputation or other characteristic to geographical origin. This structure connects collective producer organisation, national administration and a single Union-wide intellectual-property right (European Union, 2023).

The system became fully applicable in December 2025. In May 2026, Porcelaine de Limoges became the first craft and industrial geographical indication registered under the new EU framework, recognising the relationship among Limoges porcelain, the Haute-Vienne production area and more than two centuries of associated know-how (EUIPO, 2026b). By 17 July 2026, EUIPO (2026c) reported 81 applications from seven Member States and 20 confirmed registrations, with textiles, stone products and ceramics among the leading fields represented.

The European Union model establishes geographical origin as a distinct form of collective product recognition, supported by producer organisation, specifications, verification and a common registration system across multiple industries.

The EU model provides a common legal framework for place-linked craft and industrial product names alongside separate systems for practitioner identity, craftsmanship, enterprise recognition and provenance. This creates a coherent architecture in which geographical entitlement is evidenced through the product–place relationship and can operate alongside other forms of recognition.

16.6 AUSTRALIAN RECOGNITION FRAMEWORK

The comparative systems recognise different units because they perform different functions. Japan distinguishes traditional productive industries from cultural techniques and their holders. Germany recognises skilled occupations, enterprises, advanced vocational progression and training responsibilities. Italy provides a statutory category for practitioner-led artisan enterprise. Harris Tweed protects a precisely defined relationship among product, material, process, producers and place. The European Union provides a cross-sector geographical-indication right for qualifying craft and industrial product names.

Australia already possesses elements of these functions. Qualifications and apprenticeships recognise training and occupational capability; occupational and industry classifications record particular jobs and enterprises; certification trade marks can verify defined product and geographical claims; and wine geographical indications are protected through a separate dedicated statutory system (IP Australia, n.d.-a). Following the conclusion of Australia–European Union Free Trade Agreement negotiations, Australia has committed to developing a new GI system to protect 396 agreed European agricultural and spirit geographical indications and provide a pathway for qualifying Australian agricultural and spirit names, subject to the agreement's entry into force and domestic implementation (DFAT, 2026b). Cultural and heritage systems support particular forms of practice, while industry and professional organisations maintain practitioner, enterprise and product records.

Institutional responsibility should follow the same principle of differentiated but connected functions. Public authorities should hold statutory registration, oversight and review responsibilities. Industry and professional bodies should contribute field knowledge and specialist assessment capability. Producer groups should develop collective specifications and maintain producer participation. Training providers, workplaces and practitioners should sustain skill development and transmission. First Nations cultural knowledge, authority and heritage should remain governed by the relevant First Nations knowledge holders and communities, including decisions concerning names, practices, access and disclosure.

The comparative models demonstrate the value of giving distinct recognition functions durable institutional homes within a connected national system. An Australian framework can connect practitioners, workshops, enterprises, products, places, transmission and provenance while meeting the legal, administrative and evidentiary requirements of each function. Recognition criteria can then be applied according to the purpose of each mechanism, creating a coherent national architecture across industry, workforce, heritage, provenance and market systems.



17

Craft × Innovation: Living Knowledge, Preventative Materials and Future Manufacturing

Sustainable craft connects material practice with policy, markets and ways of living, examining how traditions and production can contribute to more sustainable societies.

—Paraphrasing Väänänen and Pöllänen (2020)

17.1 CRAFT AS A MATERIALS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

Craft is commonly separated from research and innovation by institutional classification: traditional practice is located within culture or heritage, while materials research and advanced manufacturing are located within science and industry. That division can obscure their shared concern with how materials are selected, prepared, combined and transformed. UNESCO's (n.d.-b) safeguarding framework helps identify the knowledge involved: for traditional craftsmanship, safeguarding is directed principally towards the knowledge and skills that enable production, rather than the preservation of finished objects alone (UNESCO, n.d.-b). In the terms used throughout this report, knowledge and skill constitute capability; transmission carries that capability between people and generations; craft exercises it through material practice; and provenance records its relationship to maker, material, process, place and product.

Across material fields, this capability includes accumulated observation of fibre length, twist, tension and moisture; clay composition, shrinkage and firing; timber grain and seasoning; hide preparation and treatment; glass composition and heat; and fermentation, maturation and temperature in food production. The transformation of flax into linen demonstrates the density of knowledge between resource and product. Soil, climate, crop density and harvest timing influence fibre quality, while drying, retting, scutching, repeated combing, spinning and bleaching must each be controlled (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2016). The finished cloth embodies more than a raw material: it embodies a sequence of consequential judgements.

This does not mean that historical practitioners possessed contemporary scientific explanations, or that inherited practices should be accepted without testing. It means that material behaviour was observed, compared and stabilised through repeated practice. Some of that knowledge is explicit in recipes, specifications and tools; some is tacit, including judgements of readiness, touch, sound, resistance and response to changing environmental conditions. As Pye (1968) argued, workmanship is defined partly by the extent to which the quality of an outcome remains dependent on judgement, dexterity and care during making.

The programs reviewed in this report demonstrate significant Australian materials-research capability, but they do not yet constitute an explicit national pathway for identifying craft-held material knowledge and connecting it with scientific characterisation, prototyping and manufacture. The national review of research and development similarly identifies weak coordination and insufficient translation of knowledge into Australian products and industries (Strategic Examination of R&D Independent Expert Panel, 2025).

Craft × Innovation should provide that connection without treating every inherited practice as superior, environmentally preferable or commercially transferable. Its task is to identify a material proposition; establish who holds and may authorise the relevant knowledge; test the underlying mechanism; and preserve practitioner participation through research and translation. The future value of a material practice cannot be measured only by the products it currently produces.

17.2 THE MATERIAL LIBRARY



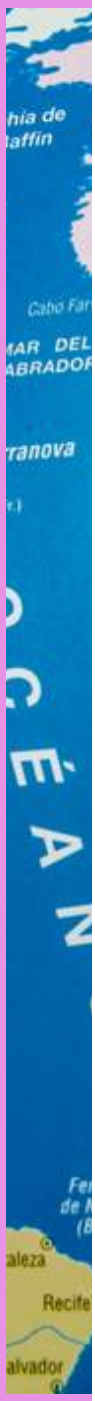
Product-led development begins with an intended function and seeks a material capable of meeting its specification. A complementary approach begins with the material: what functional properties are already present in locally available fibres, plants, agricultural by-products, biological materials, clays and minerals, and what products might become possible when those properties are better understood? A resource does not prescribe its eventual use. Productive value arises from the relationship between material properties, preparation, process and knowledge.

Familiar transformations demonstrate the principle. Flax becomes linen; fleece becomes yarn, felt or cloth; clay becomes ceramic or building material; cellulose may be separated and engineered into papers, films, fibres or composites. Coffee, cacao and grapes acquire different properties and value through harvesting, fermentation, roasting, grinding, pressing or maturation. These examples cross food, fibre and craft, but each depends on intermediate capability: the material must be recognised, prepared and transformed before its potential becomes economically or technically visible.

Australian research demonstrates what can follow when an overlooked material property is investigated systematically. The University of Queensland's Advanced Spinifex Biofuture Materials Centre, developed through a long-running partnership with Bulugudu Limited, researches spinifex-derived fibres and resins for biomedical, agricultural and advanced industrial applications, including building materials, plastics and carbon fibre. The model connects traditional Indigenous knowledge, harvesting, scientific research, prospective manufacturing and community benefit (University of Queensland, n.d.). Deakin University's Research Hub for Future Fibres provides a different capability, investigating natural-fibre modification, new fibre sources, compostability, degradation pathways, recycling gaps and high-performance fibre applications (Deakin University, n.d.).

The initiatives reviewed here do not demonstrate a shared national discovery system connecting dispersed craft-held material knowledge with research and manufacture while preserving existing rights, cultural authority, context and relationships to place. Australia's national R&D review observes that the economy remains heavily dependent on exporting natural resources and agricultural products, while manufacturing forms one of the lowest shares of national output in the OECD. It also identifies an atomised innovation system that is insufficiently effective at turning knowledge into products, growth and employment (Strategic Examination of R&D Independent Expert Panel, 2025).

A national Craft × Innovation material library could record material or species, geographical source, current uses, preparation methods, known properties, knowledge holders, processing infrastructure, existing research, safety questions and prospective end-of-life pathways. Inclusion would not certify that a material is sustainable, safe or commercially viable. It would identify where a resource, an established body of practical knowledge and a testable research question already coexist. Rather than merely rebuilding a manufacturing chain that Australia has lost, the library would help determine where Australia could build a materially safer and more distinctive one.



17.3 GLOBAL CRAFT KNOWLEDGE AS AN INNOVATION RESOURCE

Traditional and place-based production systems show that material knowledge develops through relationships among species, climate, geography, preparation, tools and repeated practice. They document material problems solved under different technological and environmental conditions. Comparative research can identify principles that warrant scientific investigation, while recognising that knowledge may be culturally governed, ecologically specific or inseparable from the communities that sustain it.

In Peru, Yánesha women in the Oxapampa-Asháninka-Yánesha Biosphere Reserve collect and prepare leaves, bark and roots for natural colour, using cold and heated processes that produce different effects. UNESCO (2025) records this knowledge as an intergenerational practice connecting forest species, harvesting, identity and textile production. In Chinchero, weaving organisations have reintroduced natural dyes including indigo, cochineal red and chilka green, while Taquile textile practice connects spinning, dyeing, weaving, everyday use and community transmission (Center for Traditional Textiles of Cusco, n.d.; UNESCO, 2008).

Other systems show different material relationships. Chinese sericulture integrates mulberry cultivation, silkworm raising, cocoon selection, reeling, thread production and weaving within a transmitted rural production system (UNESCO, 2009a). In Japan, Ojiya-chijimi and Echigo-jofu production combines hand-split ramie, thread making, resist dyeing, weaving, washing and finishing cloth on snow-covered fields. The practice is materially connected to the Uonuma region's cooler climate and snowy winters (UNESCO, 2009b). These systems do not provide formulas that can simply be lifted into another place. They point to researchable principles: biological fibre production, fibre preparation, fermentation and extraction, climatic finishing, process sequence and the interaction of material performance with local conditions.

Research must distinguish access to a resource from authority to use associated knowledge. Particular cultural knowledge, techniques, names, designs, practices and restricted information may nevertheless be governed by communities and knowledge holders. In Australia, the AIATSIS Code requires Indigenous leadership, continuing control of culture and heritage, appropriate attribution and benefit from commercial development arising from Indigenous lands, waters and knowledge (AIATSIS, 2020).

Global craft knowledge should enter innovation through documented collaboration, not extraction or aesthetic borrowing. Research must establish whose knowledge is involved, what may be recorded or tested, how benefits and intellectual property will be governed, and whether translation would damage the practice or ecology on which it depends. Under those conditions, craft knowledge becomes neither folklore nor a catalogue of techniques available for appropriation. It becomes evidence, research capability and a continuing source of material questions.

17.4 PREVENTATIVE TEXTILES



Australia's textile-waste problem is substantial and cannot be addressed solely at the point of disposal. In 2018–19, Australia generated approximately 780,000 tonnes of textile waste, of which clothing accounted for around 32 per cent by weight. Only 3 per cent was recycled, with the remainder entering landfill (DCCEEW, 2023). A more recent national clothing benchmark estimated that Australians purchased 1.51 billion items of clothing in 2024 and sent approximately 220,000 tonnes—or 880 million clothing items—to Australian landfill. Approximately 37,500 tonnes was recycled in Australia or internationally during the same year (Seamless, 2025). Although these datasets measure different scopes and periods, both show the volume entering waste and recovery systems after decisions about fibre, blends, chemistry, construction and durability have already been made.

Collection, sorting, reuse and recycling remain necessary but incomplete interventions. Australia's Circular Economy Framework identifies product design as a critical intervention point, estimating that approximately 80 per cent of environmental impact is determined at the design stage. Its priorities include durability, repairability and reducing chemicals of concern; it also recognises that problematic chemical building blocks can obstruct safe recirculation and remanufacture (DCCEEW, 2024). The European Union's textiles strategy similarly adopts a whole-lifecycle approach and seeks textile products that are durable, repairable, recyclable and free of hazardous substances (European Commission, 2022).

For the purposes of this report, Preventative Textiles describes an upstream research and design approach that seeks to minimise avoidable material, chemical, exposure and end-of-life harms before textile manufacture occurs, rather than relying principally on recovery or remediation after a product becomes waste. It asks what function is required; which fibre or material can deliver it; how much transformation is necessary; which dyes, finishes, coatings and additives are introduced; whether construction permits repair or separation; what may be released during wear, heating, laundering and abrasion; and what end-of-life pathway exists.

The approach does not assume that natural fibres are automatically benign. Natural materials can involve intensive land or water use, hazardous mordants or persistent finishes; synthetic fibres may provide functions for which alternatives are not yet technically or economically suitable. Nor does the available evidence establish that synthetic clothing as a category causes cancer, obesity or endocrine disease. It does, however, identify potentially hazardous substances in skin-contact textiles and continuing uncertainty concerning chronic exposure, chemical mixtures, dermal pathways and microfibres (Rovira and Domingo, 2019; Rovira et al., 2025).

Preventative Textiles complements circularity by concentrating on upstream material selection, safer chemistry, exposure prevention and product design, alongside strategies for durability, reuse, repair and recovery. The Craftsmanship Star Rating Framework in Appendix B extends these upstream questions across tangible products and connects them with information available to consumers before purchase.



17.5 COLOUR, CHEMISTRY AND THE RETURN TO BIOLOGICAL PROCESSES

Colour demonstrates both the opportunity and the limits of reconnecting craft knowledge with contemporary materials science. Biological colour systems link species and place with harvest timing, extraction, water, heat, fermentation, modifiers, mordants and fibre chemistry. Yánesha dye practice in Peru, for example, differentiates cold and heated preparation of leaves, bark and roots, while Chinchero weaving practice uses indigo, cochineal and chilka within a continuing regional textile system (UNESCO, 2025; Center for Traditional Textiles of Cusco, n.d.). Such systems preserve knowledge of colourant sources and fibre relationships, but they do not establish that every natural dye is non-toxic, resource-efficient or suitable for industrial production.

The environmental performance of biological colour depends on the complete process. Mordants can improve the fixation and colour fastness of certain natural dyes, while some metallic mordants present toxicity and wastewater concerns. Bio-mordants may reduce some hazards, yet current research identifies constraints including availability, cost, consistency and industrial processing requirements (Islam et al., 2025). Natural colour also presents technical questions concerning shade reproducibility, light and wash fastness, seasonal supply, extraction yield and land use. The appropriate comparison is not simply natural dye versus synthetic dye, but complete colour systems assessed against defined performance, exposure and environmental criteria.

Advanced application technologies create a separate research opportunity. Peer-reviewed research has demonstrated that atmospheric plasma can bond specially formulated dyes to cotton, nylon and polyester without water in the dyeing stage (Zaidy et al., 2019). In Australia, Xefco's Ausora platform uses atmospheric plasma to apply colour and functional finishes to fibre surfaces. In 2026, the Australian Government awarded Xefco approximately $5 million through the Industry Growth Program to manufacture and commercialise Ausora systems; DCCEEW subsequently reported preparation of the first commercial-scale system for deployment in South-East Asia (DISR, 2026c; DCCEEW, 2026). These sources establish an Australian translation pathway for plasma application, not that Ausora currently applies Peruvian dyes or naturally derived colourants.

The research gap lies between these fields. A Craft × Innovation colour program could characterise selected biological colourants and processes, then test extraction requirements, chemical composition, fibre affinity, mordant or modifier requirements, toxicity, fastness, wastewater impacts, biodegradation and compatibility with low-water or waterless application systems. Provenance could record species, location, harvest, knowledge authority, processing and test results.

The objective is not to return industrial production to dye pots or to treat biological colour as inherently safe. It is to determine whether accumulated knowledge of species yielding biological colourants and fibre-colour relationships can contribute to reproducible colour systems that use less water, avoid problematic chemistry and retain a verifiable relationship to material and place.

17.6 FROM CRAFT BENCH TO ADVANCED MANUFACTURING



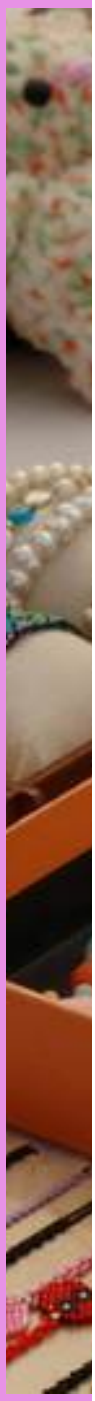
The central challenge for Craft × Innovation is translation. A material technique may work reliably in a workshop yet remain unsuitable for wider production because its mechanism has not been characterised, inputs vary, performance is unmeasured or the process cannot be reproduced at scale. Conversely, laboratory research may identify useful material properties without access to the tacit knowledge required to select, prepare or manipulate the material consistently. Effective translation requires practical observation, scientific characterisation and manufacturing trials to inform one another.

Australia possesses significant elements of this pathway. Deakin University's Future Fibres Facility combines fibre-production and yarn-processing equipment with specialised knitting, weaving, prototyping and pilot-scale capability. Its research program includes natural-fibre modification, new fibre development, compostability, degradation pathways, recycling technologies and water-free dyeing partnerships (Deakin University, n.d., 2023). The University of Queensland spinifex program demonstrates another model in which knowledge holders, researchers, material processing and prospective commercial applications remain connected (University of Queensland, n.d.).

A Craft × Innovation project could begin with a documented practice, observed material behaviour or production problem. It could then proceed through source and preparation records; microscopy and chemical characterisation; fibre morphology, strength, thermal and moisture testing; pigment or surface analysis; spinning and blending trials; construction by weaving, knitting or another process; finishing; durability, repair and exposure testing; prototype manufacture; and pilot production. The precise sequence would differ for ceramics, timber, leather, glass, food or building materials, but the principle would remain: the practical knowledge that identifies a potentially useful relationship should stay connected to the evidence used to explain, test and reproduce it.

This approach also clarifies the meaning of advanced manufacturing. Greater technical sophistication does not necessarily require materials to become increasingly artificial. In some applications, innovation may consist of using a natural material more precisely, altering fibre architecture, reducing processing stages, eliminating a wet process, changing construction or applying a targeted surface treatment. Natural does not automatically mean safe, biodegradable or environmentally preferable; each claim requires testing against the intended function and lifecycle.

The institutional problem is that these costs and participants are rarely treated as one translation pathway. Australia's national R&D review identifies an atomised system, inadequate focus on translation, and funding programs that often fail to cover the actual cost of research (Strategic Examination of R&D Independent Expert Panel, 2025). Funding for Craft × Innovation should recognise practitioner and producer time, material sourcing, laboratory access, cultural and intellectual-property governance, iterative testing, prototype development and manufacturing trials as connected research costs. The appropriate objective is the least materially and environmentally burdensome transformation capable of delivering verified performance.



17.7 PLACE, PROVENANCE AND THE NEXT GENERATION OF GIS AND CIGIS

Craft × Innovation strengthens the geographical-indication argument by providing a method for investigating how place contributes to a product's characteristics rather than treating geographical identity as branding alone. Under Regulation (EU) 2023/2411, a craft or industrial product must meet three cumulative requirements: it must originate in a specific place, region or country; possess a quality, reputation or other characteristic essentially attributable to that geographical origin; and have at least one production step within the defined geographical area (European Union, 2023, art 6). Innovation undertaken in a region does not, by itself, establish a geographical indication. The product–place relationship must be evidenced.

The Regulation also requires an objective product specification describing the product, defined area, production methods, relevant production steps and evidence linking geographical origin to the claimed quality, reputation or characteristic. It recognises that human or natural factors, or their combination, may determine which production steps are material to that link (European Union, 2023, recital 17 and arts 6 and 9). This creates a direct role for material research: fibres can be compared by source; environmental and processing variables can be documented; local colour or finishing systems can be tested; and the production stages that materially affect the final product can be distinguished from those that do not.

Harris Tweed demonstrates how material, method, producers and place can operate as a legally defined production system. The Harris Tweed Act requires qualifying cloth to be handwoven by islanders at their homes in the Outer Hebrides, finished there, and made from pure virgin wool dyed and spun there. Production remains distributed among mills, finishers and independent weavers, while statutory definition, inspection and the Orb Mark hold the regional chain together (Harris Tweed Act 1993; Harris Tweed Authority, 2025).

An Australian product could potentially derive distinctive characteristics from locally produced material, environmental conditions, a regional preparation or processing method, specialist craftsmanship and contemporary manufacturing technology. Craft × Innovation could determine whether that relationship is measurable. Provenance would provide the evidentiary chain: material source, practitioner or producer, method, production stage, place, knowledge lineage, test results and subsequent manufacturing history.

A GI or CIGI protects a qualifying place-linked name, with entitlement to use it governed by the applicable product specification. Provenance documents the chain connecting material, maker, method and place. Craftsmanship assessment concerns the demonstrated quality of making. None substitutes for the others, and not every place-linked product will satisfy a statutory GI test. The opportunity is not another regional label. It is an evidence system through which producer groups can identify where material, knowledge, production and place genuinely combine to create a distinctive product capable of supporting regional enterprise and, where the legal requirements are met, geographical-origin protection.

17.8 AN AUSTRALIAN CRAFT × INNOVATION RESEARCH SYSTEM



Australia possesses many components of a craft-to-materials innovation system, but they remain distributed across institutional fields. Growers supply biological materials; practitioners and manufacturers hold process knowledge; First Nations communities hold distinct cultural knowledge and authority; universities, pilot facilities and manufacturers provide characterisation and translation; and provenance, certification and prospective geographical-indication systems can substantiate claims. The national R&D review identifies the broader structural problem: Australia's system is atomised, insufficiently coordinated and less effective than it should be at translating knowledge into products, industries and employment (Strategic Examination of R&D Independent Expert Panel, 2025).

Existing initiatives demonstrate parts of the model. Deakin's Future Fibres Facility connects fibre research with yarn processing, knitting, weaving and prototyping; the University of Queensland spinifex partnership connects Indigenous knowledge and governance with advanced-material applications and prospective manufacturing (Deakin University, n.d.; University of Queensland, n.d.). They do not by themselves establish a national, cross-material system beginning with craft-held knowledge and extending through authority, testing, production and provenance.

At the time of writing, the proposed Future Textiles Cooperative Research Centre has set out a public program for a national value-chain platform with three research streams: Creating Better Textiles, Keeping Textiles in Use and Recovering Textile Value (Future Textiles CRC, 2026). It could provide an implementation vehicle for parts of this agenda. Within that emerging platform, a defined Craft × Innovation workstream could connect craft-held material knowledge, cultural authority, biological colour, provenance and human and environmental safety. Its relationship to the CRC's other research streams should be established through collaborative program development.

A National Craft × Innovation and Preventative Materials Program should connect material and place → knowledge and authority → preparation → material principle → scientific characterisation → prototype → advanced manufacturing → product → use, repair and end of life, with transmission and provenance operating across the chain. Projects should begin with a defined material or production question. Funding should cover knowledge-holder, practitioner, grower and producer participation; laboratory testing; environmental and human-safety assessment where relevant; cultural and intellectual-property agreements; prototypes, equipment and pilot manufacture; provenance records; and commercial feasibility.

Textiles provide an appropriate first demonstrator because Australia combines major natural-fibre production, advanced research capability, severe waste and processing gaps, and an emerging national CRC proposal. The system should nevertheless be capable of extending to ceramics, timber, leather, glass, food, pigments and building materials. The program would test how accumulated material knowledge can improve contemporary production, reduce avoidable material harms and retain more value and capability in Australian regions.

18

Findings

“Europe’s craft sector, estimated at €50 billion, is being held back because it remains largely invisible in politics and statistics.”

European Crafts Alliance, 2025b

18.1 SECTOR RECOGNITION



Craft operates across arts, manufacturing, construction, food, heritage, education, repair, retail and tourism, but Australian administrative systems record these activities according to their own purposes rather than as one productive field. Occupational statistics identify jobs, industry statistics classify enterprises by principal activity, cultural accounts measure selected creative activity, training systems record qualifications and contracts, and business registers record legal entities. Each produces valid information, yet none follows the relationships among material practice, skilled labour, enterprise, transmission, production and provenance that constitute the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector.

The classification problem remains visible in the current Occupation Standard Classification for Australia. The 2026 consultation draft for OSCA 2027 retains Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals as one unit group, with potter or ceramic artist separately identified while glass artists, leadlighters, mosaic artists, printmakers, quilters and textile artists remain within a residual category. Cabinetmakers, jewellers, stonemasons, textile workers, shoemakers, instrument makers and repair occupations sit elsewhere in the classification (ABS, 2026b). Improving individual occupation codes is valuable, but it cannot by itself create a sector boundary across professional, trade, production and enterprise categories.

The evidence supports sector recognition as an administrative and measurement requirement rather than a claim that existing classifications are incorrect. The relevant unit is a trade, industry, workforce and living-heritage sector whose constituent occupations and enterprises remain visible within their existing systems but can also be connected through a national crosswalk and repeatable sector account. This keeps artists, tradespeople, manufacturers, teachers, producers and conservators identifiable within their existing systems while making their shared dependence on material capability and transmission measurable.

Recognition is consequential because later policy functions depend on knowing what is being governed. Workforce planning requires identifiable occupations and workplaces; transmission policy requires knowledge holders and successors; productive-capability policy requires facilities and supply chains; provenance requires connections among maker, materials, method and place; and geographical indications require identifiable producer communities. The central finding is institutional: Australian craft is not economically absent, but its productive relationships remain administratively dispersed. National recognition supplies the common field through which those relationships can be measured without forcing them into a single occupational or cultural category.

18.2 ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE SCALE

The best available cross-occupational estimate identified 116,538 people employed in craft-skill occupations in 2021, equivalent to 1.1 per cent of the national workforce, and estimated gross value added of $19.2 billion, or approximately 1.0 per cent of the Australian economy (Luckman and Tower, 2023). It demonstrates that skilled material work operates at substantial economic scale across occupations that are usually reported separately through arts, manufacturing, construction, repair, design and technical classifications.

The professional-artists study estimated about 5,500 craft practitioners in 1992–93 and 1,700 in 2021–22, subject to cautions about classification and source differences (Throsby and Petetskaya, 2024). The much larger craft-skills estimate captures workers employed across the wider economy. The difference arises from definition and unit of analysis. It confirms the need to distinguish professional artistic practice, craft-skilled employment, enterprise activity and the wider productive sector.

Enterprise structure creates a further measurement problem. Australian craft commonly operates through sole traders, home-based businesses and micro-enterprises in which the same person undertakes production, administration, sales and teaching. McQuilten et al. (2025) found that 82 per cent of surveyed visual and craft artists received at least some income from other work. This finding is not a craft-sector estimate, but it demonstrates why principal-job and principal-income measures can understate portfolio practice and the economic labour supporting small creative enterprises. At the other end of the scale, skilled workers employed inside larger manufacturers disappear statistically into the employer's industry.

International evidence shows what routine sector recognition can enable. Design & Crafts Council Ireland (2024) reported approximately 63,000 people directly employed, 21,000 design and craft enterprises and €4.2 billion in gross value added in 2022, equivalent to about 1.2 per cent of national GVA. The comparison illustrates a recognised institutional account that can be repeated and connected to enterprise and regional policy.

Australia already has evidence of substantial economic contribution, and an integrated statistical account on the same footing as Ireland's would allow that contribution to be followed consistently over time. A repeatable measure requires an OSCA–ANZSIC crosswalk, field-of-practice data, employment form, enterprise scale, production setting, regional location and transmission activity. The principal finding is that scale is already demonstrable, while the present statistical architecture prevents its components from being routinely counted together or followed consistently over time.

GLOBAL MARKET OUTLOOK

USD 2.92 TRILLION

Projected global handicraft market by 2034

From USD 1.22 trillion in 2025 to USD 2.92 trillion

10.2%

projected compound annual growth (CAGR), 2026–2034

36.42%

Asia Pacific share of the global market in 2025

“Growing appreciation for artisanal and handmade products is driving demand.”

Fortune Business Insights
Handicraft Market Size, Share & Industry Analysis, 2026

Commercial market estimates and forecasts for the publisher-defined handicraft market.

18.3 PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY



Australia retains internationally significant raw materials, specialist practitioners, established manufacturers and advanced research capability, but productive capacity is uneven across the stages required to turn materials into finished goods. The clearest evidence is in wool and textiles. Australian Wool Innovation's (2024) August consultation panel pack reported that 96.3 per cent of Australian wool exports by weight were in greasy form, using available 2023–24 season data with one month still outstanding (Australian Wool Innovation, 2024). Separately, the Australian Fashion Council and R.M.Williams (2026) report that approximately 97 per cent of Australia's clothing and textile products are manufactured offshore. Earlier supply-chain analysis estimated that domestic early-stage processing capacity was sufficient for only about 5 per cent of the national wool clip (WoolProducers Australia and Deloitte Access Economics, 2022).

These figures identify a missing relationship rather than a simple absence of manufacturing. Between fibre and finished product sit scouring, carbonising, carding, top-making, spinning, dyeing, knitting, weaving, finishing, patternmaking, cutting and assembly. A surviving firm can retain exceptional capability at several stages while still depending on offshore or external processing elsewhere. Waverley Mills illustrates the point: its Tasmanian operation preserves carding, spinning, dyeing, weaving and finishing knowledge (Waverley Mills, n.d.), yet it does not constitute an intact national fibre-to-product chain. The 2026–2036 manufacturing strategy of the Australian Fashion Council and R.M.Williams (2026) similarly treats rebuilding targeted capability as a system problem involving infrastructure, workforce, technology, demand and coordination rather than the reopening of one factory.

Regional resilience also depends on specialist heritage-construction, metal and timber-repair capability. As outlined in the Heritage Trades and Professional Training Project (Heritage Victoria, 2010), specialised workshops contribute more than productive output; they function as primary training environments. Consequently, firm counts alone fail to capture vulnerability: if a sole complementary processor or repairer closes, work across dependent local enterprises can be interrupted.

Current Australian industry policy increasingly recognises this relational form of capability. The Future Made in Australia National Interest Framework defines economic resilience partly through the domestic capability needed to withstand disruption and directs attention to supply concentration, alternative sources, workforce, local supply chains and the conditions required to crowd in investment (Treasury, 2024). The analytical unit is consequently a functioning production system rather than an isolated asset.

Australia's craft and specialist-manufacturing vulnerability arises from thin and discontinuous capability chains. Materials, brands or final-stage businesses can remain visible after intermediate processing, maintenance knowledge or training capacity has contracted. Productive-capability policy requires mapping of critical stages, facilities, specialist equipment, workforce depth, transmission, suppliers and continuing demand. Without that relational evidence, investment can support individual plant while leaving the production chain required for its long-term viability incomplete.



18.4 TRANSMISSION RISK

Transmission risk is produced by the interaction of workforce age, training access, workplace capacity, succession, materials and continuing demand. Practitioner numbers alone cannot distinguish a small but viable practice from a field approaching irreversible knowledge loss. The critical question is whether advanced knowledge remains connected to people and settings through which it can be learned, exercised and passed on.

Australian workforce evidence makes the risk concrete. The National Manufacturing Strategy for Australian Fashion and Textiles identifies a median age of 57 among skilled manufacturing workers in the sector and places skills transfer and recognition of existing competency among its workforce priorities (Australian Fashion Council and R.M.Williams, 2026). The Manufacturing Workforce Plan similarly identifies an ageing workforce of specialised tradespeople and technicians as a "skills retirement cliff" where succession and knowledge-transfer mechanisms are absent (MISA, 2024). Employer evidence strengthens the point: 59 per cent of respondents to the 2025 Australian Human Rights Commission and Australian HR Institute survey agreed that departures of older workers had caused loss of key skills or knowledge, while only 13 per cent reported consistently capturing that knowledge as older workers transition out of employment (AHRI and AHRC, 2025).

Formal training does not remove this risk automatically. At 31 December 2025, Australia had 208,950 trade apprentice and trainee contracts in training, down 5.2 per cent over the year, and the six-year completion rate for the 2019 trade cohort was 58.7 per cent (NCVER, 2026a, 2026b). Craft-relevant apprenticeships exist, but smaller occupations are distributed across broad trade groups and some material fields rely on informal, community or specialist workplace learning.

International endangered-craft monitoring shows what is missing from the Australian evidence base. The United Kingdom's 2025 Red List assessed 285 crafts using practitioner and trainee numbers together with training opportunities, markets and other viability conditions; 165 were classified as endangered or critically endangered and five as locally extinct in the UK (Heritage Crafts, 2025b). Australian institutions such as the Australian Centre for Rare Arts & Forgotten Trades and the Wooden Boat Centre demonstrate active teaching.

Transmission must be measured as infrastructure. A national account needs to identify advanced practitioners, workforce age, successor relationships, teaching activity, training access, critical workshops and equipment, material constraints and market demand. For First Nations practice, authority to teach or disclose knowledge remains with the relevant knowledge holders and communities. The finding is not simply that practitioners are ageing; it is that Australia lacks the evidence required to identify where retirement, closure or loss of demand would become permanent capability loss before that loss occurs.

18.5 PROVENANCE AND MARKET VISIBILITY



Market visibility depends on the ability to distinguish different claims about a product. Trade marks identify commercial source; country-of-origin rules govern specified origin representations; certification marks verify compliance with defined rules; geographical indications protect qualifying place-linked names; and craftsmanship concerns the demonstrated quality of making. The Craftsmanship Star Rating Framework sets out a consumer information approach that organises five public pillars, including Provenance, around one overall product rating (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026b). Neither the composite result nor any other single instrument records the complete relationship among maker, materials or ingredients, method, place, knowledge lineage, transmission and subsequent custody that constitutes the report's wider provenance record.

The case evidence shows how a brand's identity and its production can part company. The histories of Ugg, Blundstone, Esky and Speedo show that a commercial or cultural identity can remain recognisably Australian after ownership, production sites, workforces or manufacturing stages have changed. Brand continuity is not reliable evidence of current production provenance. Gwenda Baker's millinery collection shows a complementary case: surviving documentation can connect an object to maker, materials, method, apprenticeship lineage, teaching and later collection custody, while gaps in the record remain visible rather than being filled through assumption. Provenance is valuable because it preserves both established relationships and uncertainty.

Digital distribution allows product imagery and artisanal language to travel independently of the production conditions they imply. Consumer law prohibits misleading representations; a persistent provenance record can provide evidence for substantiating claims and resolving disputes. The CSR Framework connects the overall display with product-specific information, while linked practitioner, producer and product records can identify contributors, production stages and separately supported claims.

The same architecture must accommodate cultural authority. For First Nations practice, authority to disclose, teach, reproduce or commercially use culturally governed knowledge rests with the relevant knowledge holders. Australia is developing stand-alone protection for First Nations traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, supported by $13.4 million over four years (Office for the Arts, n.d.). Provenance systems can support this work only where authority, consent and restrictions are recorded under First Nations governance rather than converted into unrestricted public data.

External market systems are moving in the same direction. The European Commission's (2026d) Digital Product Passport Registry became operational on 20 July 2026. Adoption of the textile-apparel delegated act, including DPP requirements, is planned for the fourth quarter of 2027; application dates will depend on the final act and its transitional provisions (European Commission, 2026b). The European craft and industrial GI system likewise requires organised evidence of product, place and producer entitlement. Provenance does not replace either regulatory instrument, but structured Australian records can allow verified information to be reused across certification, procurement, collection documentation, licensing and export compliance. Market visibility requires persistent claim-specific evidence and, where a composite label is used, a clearly bounded result linked to its underlying record rather than another general assertion of Australian, handmade or artisanal production.



18.6 ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION

Craft enterprise development requires more than the presence of makers or access to generic small-business advice. The enterprises mapped across the sector combine specialist production with material knowledge, workshop infrastructure, irregular production cycles, direct practitioner labour and, frequently, responsibility for teaching, repair or cultural transmission. Their development constraints change as the enterprise matures. An emerging practitioner may require workspace, equipment, costing and market testing; an established producer may require production planning, finance, wholesale capability or export development; and a mature workshop may face succession of ownership, machinery, supplier relationships and specialist knowledge.

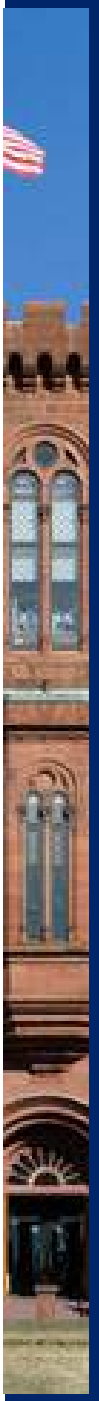
International mechanisms demonstrate the value of staged support. QEST (n.d.-a) connects individual skill development with apprenticeships, specialist training, professional networks and later transmission. Cockpit (n.d.-a) combines affordable workspace with craft-specific business development. Design & Crafts Council Ireland operates foundation, growth and accelerator programs tailored to different stages of craft enterprise, with mentoring in pricing, financial management, market development and international growth. Its Growth Programme explicitly targets established craft businesses seeking to scale in domestic or international markets (QEST, n.d.-a; Cockpit, n.d.-a, n.d.-c; DCCI, n.d.-a, n.d.-c). The common feature is not one business model, but support matched to the productive stage of the enterprise.

Growth itself requires a broader measure than employee numbers. A craft enterprise may strengthen economically through improved margins, increased production capacity, new products, larger commissions, wholesale relationships, licensing, subcontracting, collaboration or access to new markets while remaining deliberately small. Networks can allow independent producers to share capability and undertake work beyond the capacity of one workshop without requiring consolidation into a larger firm.

Succession creates a further productive risk. Closure of a specialist enterprise can disperse machinery, premises, supplier knowledge, designs, customer relationships and embodied skill at the same time. Japanese small-enterprise succession programs demonstrate that transfer can be treated as an economic-development function rather than left entirely to family inheritance or market sale (Small and Medium Enterprise Agency, n.d.-a). For craft, succession planning must identify the productive system being transferred as well as the legal business entity.

The finding is that entrepreneurship, innovation and succession form part of craft-sector infrastructure. Australia requires a staged enterprise-development pathway capable of incubating new businesses, accelerating viable enterprises, supporting productive networks, funding applied product innovation and facilitating the transfer of established workshops. Without that structure, business support can occur after a practitioner has already assembled the difficult parts of the productive system alone, while the closure of mature enterprises can remove capabilities that are considerably more difficult to reconstruct than the business registration itself.

18.7 INSTITUTIONAL COMPARISON



The international comparison demonstrates that durable recognition is achieved through different legal and institutional units rather than through one universal definition of craft. Japan designates traditional craft industries while recognising significant cultural techniques and their holders through a separate cultural-property system. Germany locates skilled crafts within occupational and economic regulation through enterprise registers, Chambers of Crafts, vocational training and Meister progression. Italy gives the artisan entrepreneur and artisan enterprise statutory identity. The Harris Tweed system protects one precisely defined relationship among product, material, process, producer and place. The European Union provides a cross-sector geographical-indication right for qualifying craft and industrial product names.

These systems are not interchangeable, but their recurring functions are consistent. Each identifies the unit being recognised; establishes eligibility or a specification; assigns an institution to administer the system; requires evidence; determines who may use the recognised status or right; and provides some means of maintaining, reviewing or enforcing it. Where transmission is part of the function, responsibility is attached to recognised practitioners, employers, chambers, producer organisations or safeguarding institutions rather than assumed to occur automatically.

Supporting comparators reinforce particular parts of this architecture. Austria, Switzerland, Sweden and Slovenia demonstrate advanced vocational progression through Meister, master or journeyman structures; France gives métiers d'art formal occupational visibility; and Ireland demonstrates the measurement and enterprise-development advantages of a national design-and-craft agency. These comparisons illustrate institutional mechanisms.

A second finding concerns duration. Germany's chambers, Japan's designated-industry system, Harris Tweed's statutory authority and the European GI register provide continuing administrative homes that survive changes in individual projects and funding rounds. Advanced skill, producer organisation, succession and reputation develop over periods longer than typical project grants. Durable institutions accumulate records, expertise and relationships and can detect change that episodic programs cannot.

Each comparator addresses part of the Australian requirement. Australia's federal system, dispersed micro-enterprise base, First Nations cultural authority, existing vocational arrangements and emerging digital-trade obligations require a composite structure. The evidence supports separation with connection: practitioner capability, atelier or enterprise status, craftsmanship assessment, provenance and geographical origin should remain distinct claims while operating through compatible evidence and governance.

18.8 REGULATORY OPPORTUNITY

The regulatory environment presents a concentrated implementation window. Following the conclusion of Australia–European Union Free Trade Agreement negotiations on 24 March 2026, Australia is developing a new domestic GI system with an examination and objection process. The announced commitments concern agricultural goods and spirits, making the European procedure the direct route for craft and industrial products (DFAT, 2026b). The European Union's craft and industrial GI regime is operational: after its first six months EUIPO (2026c) reported 81 applications and 20 registrations led by textiles, stone and ceramics. Australian craft and industrial applicants seeking European protection will require an appropriate protected right in the country of origin.

Product-information regulation is developing in parallel. The European Commission made the central Digital Product Passport Registry operational on 20 July 2026, while adoption of the textile-apparel delegated act, including DPP requirements, is planned for the fourth quarter of 2027, with application dates dependent on the final legislation (European Commission, 2026b, 2026d). Australian exporters will increasingly encounter requirements for structured identifiers and verifiable product data. A provenance system designed independently of these requirements would risk duplicate records, while interoperable identifiers and evidence could support domestic purposes and external compliance.

The domestic measurement architecture is open to change. The ABS consultation draft for OSCA 2027 closed on 18 September 2026 and covered changes to six-digit occupations, titles, specialisations and tasks (ABS, 2026b). Occupation reform cannot define the sector by itself. With this consultation closed and the ABS finalising the March 2027 release, the next steps are to assess the resulting classification and pursue further occupation updates alongside development of a broader OSCA–ANZSIC crosswalk.

Australia's planned association with Horizon Europe adds a research and innovation pathway. Treaty negotiations concluded in June 2026 and Australian entities are expected to be able to apply for Pillar II calls from 1 January 2027 under transitional arrangements. Government implementation planning is considering national contact points, participation by industry and organisations, and alignment with national priorities (DISR, 2026a, 2026b). This creates a route through which provenance systems, circular production, material innovation, skills infrastructure and regional manufacturing can be developed through international collaboration.

These developments sit beside the Future Made in Australia capability framework and First Nations-led development of stand-alone protection for traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions. Their purposes differ, but all require clearer evidence about people, products, production, place, capability or authority.

The finding is one of timing as well as policy design. Statistical mapping, producer-group development, provenance architecture and skills-risk identification can begin before a complete legislative framework exists. Coordinating those foundations now would allow subsequent GI, digital-product, research, manufacturing and cultural-rights systems to draw from compatible evidence rather than create parallel infrastructures. The external systems will continue to develop regardless; the opportunity is to ensure Australian craft producers and practitioners enter them with identity.

18.9 DEDICATED TRANSLATION INFRASTRUCTURE FOR CRAFT-LED INNOVATION

Craft knowledge is commonly supported through heritage or small-business programs, while research and innovation policy is organised around universities, science, technology and industry. This division leaves practitioner-held material and process knowledge poorly positioned to enter formal research, testing and commercialisation. The gap identified through this review is the absence of a clearly specified national, cross-material pathway connecting practitioner-held capability with authorised research, testing and translation.

The EU-funded ekip project provides directly relevant recommendations on crafts-led innovation. Developed through background research, a policy lab and community review, it identifies outdated perceptions, limited data, fragmented representation, weak cross-sector connections and inadequate access to infrastructure and finance as barriers. It calls for cross-domain strategy, training, networks, inclusive funding and regulation that enables innovation while safeguarding craft knowledge and values (ekip, 2025; Malmström, 2025).

Practice examples demonstrate how such connections can operate. Japan's Craft x Tech links regional practitioners in lacquer, metal, wood, ceramics, washi and textiles with designers, contemporary technologies and the University of Tokyo's Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology. Its activities include collaborative production, joint research, technological development and talent exchange (Craft x Tech, n.d.). It is an experimental initiative rather than a national policy model, but it demonstrates practitioners participating as active collaborators rather than as sources of heritage imagery or techniques.

Material-driven design extends the proposition into biomaterials and regenerative-materials research. Work reported by ekip brings design into material development alongside biology and engineering and identifies safety, reliability, public trust and user experience as matters requiring early consideration (Malmström, 2026). This supports a preventative approach. The safety, environmental benefit and commercial viability of biological or "regenerative" materials require testing.

Australia has relevant but dispersed capability. Deakin University supports fibre development and pilot-scale textile production (Deakin University, n.d., 2023); the University of Queensland's spinifex program connects Indigenous knowledge and advanced-material applications (University of Queensland, n.d.); and the proposed Future Textiles CRC would coordinate research across the textile value chain (Future Textiles CRC, 2026). Australia's national R&D review nevertheless describes an atomised system with weak translation into products and industries (Strategic Examination of R&D Independent Expert Panel, 2025). No national program identified through this report has an explicit cross-material mandate connecting authorised craft-held knowledge with scientific characterisation, preventative assessment, prototyping and manufacturing.

The gap is one of research recognition and translation infrastructure. Australia requires a bounded Craft × Innovation mechanism that pays practitioners and knowledge holders as research partners, protects cultural and intellectual authority, and funds progression from material proposition to verified application. Textiles provide an appropriate first demonstrator, but the mechanism should be capable of later application to ceramics, timber, leather, glass, pigments, food and building materials.



18.10 ALIGNMENT WITH THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The findings and proposed policy architecture of this report are relevant to several targets of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly where craft intersects with education, skilled work, productive enterprise, industrial capability, cultural heritage, responsible production and international cooperation. The 2030 Agenda integrates economic, social and environmental development through 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and associated targets, providing a useful international frame through which the wider public value of craft-trade capability can be understood (United Nations General Assembly, 2015).



Figure 18.1. Author's mapping of selected policy proposals to SDG targets (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). Alignment indicates policy relevance, not measured progress against SDG indicators. SDG icons: United Nations.
The content of this publication has not been approved by the United Nations and does not reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials or Member States. Sustainable Development Goals: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment

Taken together, these alignments position craft beyond a single cultural-policy category. The sector identified in this report intersects with education, workforce development, manufacturing, regional economies, heritage safeguarding, circular production and international research cooperation. Its policy architecture has relevance across multiple areas of Australia's implementation of the 2030 Agenda rather than within a single Goal or portfolio.

19

Recommendations.

“This manifesto is our sector’s collective vision—and our call for meaningful, sustained policy action.”

European Crafts Alliance, 2025a
Cristina Mendes, President, European Crafts Alliance

01 Recommendation One

Australian Craft and Provenance Bill

An Australian Craft and Provenance Bill should establish the legislative foundation for recognition, governance and development of the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector. The Bill should provide a coherent statutory framework for practitioner and atelier recognition, advanced-practice pathways, field-specific craftsmanship assessment, provenance infrastructure, certification functions, transmission settings and, subject to dedicated consultation and legislative design, protection for qualifying craft and industrial geographical indications.

The legislation should define the public functions required to support the sector and assign responsibility through clear governance, accountability and delegation arrangements. These functions should include published standards, independent assessment, review and appeal, registry and data governance, certification oversight, enforcement pathways and nationally interoperable practitioner, producer and product records.

The legislative architecture should preserve the distinct purpose of practitioner identity, craftsmanship assessment, provenance, certification, geographical origin and cultural authority while enabling these records to operate through connected infrastructure. This separation should allow each claim to be evidenced, administered and communicated according to its own legal or technical requirements.

Implementation should provide for coordination across relevant Commonwealth portfolios, states and territories, First Nations authorities, producer groups, industry bodies, training and research institutions, collecting organisations and regional networks. Specialist functions should be capable of being delivered by appropriately qualified bodies under published standards, transparent appointment criteria and statutory oversight.

First Nations cultural knowledge, authority and heritage should be protected throughout the framework, guided by Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) rights, including in governance, consent, access, disclosure and registry design.

The Bill should operate as enabling legislation: establishing the common architecture within which subsequent sector measures can be implemented consistently, while allowing detailed standards, technical schedules and administrative procedures to evolve through subordinate instruments and recognised sector frameworks.

The objective is to create a durable national framework through which recognition, evidence, protection, transmission and market-facing verification can be administered consistently across material fields while remaining responsive to field-specific practice and expertise. Implementation should be supported by a costed plan identifying lead agencies, existing institutional capacity, dependencies, milestones and baseline indicators, with independent evaluation of pilots before national expansion.

02

Recommendation Two

National recognition of the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector

The Australian Craft and Provenance Sector should be formally recognised as a defined economic, trade, workforce, productive and living-heritage sector. Primary policy responsibility should sit within the Australian Government's industry portfolio, recognising craft as skilled production and trade, with structured coordination across arts and culture, education, employment and skills, agriculture, regional development, heritage, trade, tourism and First Nations policy.

Recognition should create a common administrative and statistical frame across activities that are currently distributed through multiple portfolios and industry systems. Craft-skilled occupations and enterprises should remain visible within their existing classifications and regulatory settings while also contributing to a national sector account. This dual visibility would allow ceramicists, stonemasons, textile workers, artisan food producers and other practitioners to be recognised both within their established industries and as part of the wider craft and provenance economy.

A shared sector framework should support coordinated policy development across workforce capability, training, enterprise development, regional production, heritage safeguarding, provenance, product-origin policy, trade, procurement and market development. Common definitions, indicators and reporting arrangements should enable government to identify where capability is concentrated, where policy settings intersect and where gaps in skills, infrastructure, productive capacity or market access require intervention.

Cross-portfolio governance should be coordinated through the national authority proposed in Recommendation Four, with agreed national indicators and periodic public reporting. This should preserve institutional knowledge, coordinate evidence and maintain continuity across policy cycles.

Formal recognition should also improve the sector's visibility within national economic and industry policy, including workforce planning, regional development, manufacturing capability, innovation, export readiness and investment settings. This would provide a stronger basis for assessing the sector's contribution over time and for aligning public programs with identifiable capability and need.

International systems demonstrate the value of durable institutional recognition. Germany's chamber structures, Japan's designated-industry framework and Ireland's national craft agency each provide enduring administrative settings through which sector knowledge, industry development and public support accumulate over time. Australia should establish equivalent continuity through a nationally recognised sector framework with clear policy ownership, shared evidence and coordinated implementation (Federal Republic of Germany, 1953; Government of Japan, 1974; DCCI, 2024).

03 Recommendation Three

National statistical account and classification crosswalk

The Australian Bureau of Statistics, working with Jobs and Skills Australia and relevant industry and sector bodies, should establish a national craft-sector crosswalk across OSCA and ANZSIC and develop a recurring statistical account for the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector.

The crosswalk should identify the occupations and industries that contribute to the sector while retaining their existing classification locations. It should provide a reproducible method for aggregating craft-skilled work across manufacturing, construction, repair, cultural production, food, design and related fields, supported by consistent definitions of practitioner, enterprise, production setting and field of practice.

A recurring statistical collection should measure employment status, portfolio work, self-employment, home-based and micro-enterprise production, enterprise scale, regional distribution, teaching and transmission, repair activity, workshop and equipment infrastructure and practitioner participation within larger manufacturing enterprises. These measures should be designed to capture the productive and workforce relationships that sit across conventional occupation and industry boundaries.

OSCA development should continue to improve the visibility of individual craft-skilled occupations where separate coding is supported by evidence, while the broader sector account should operate through a cross-classification methodology capable of tracking the sector as a whole. ANZSIC, OSCA and relevant administrative datasets should be used together to create a stable statistical base for policy, workforce and industry analysis.

Economic modelling should establish repeatable measures of employment, enterprise activity, gross value added, geographic distribution and change over time. The 2021 estimate of 116,538 craft-skilled workers and $19.2 billion in gross value added provides a historical benchmark within Luckman and Tower's (2023) occupational definition. A continuing series for the wider sector defined in this report will require historical ANZSCO-to-OSCA mapping, a reconciled sector boundary and controls against double counting.

The statistical account should be updated on a regular published cycle and supported by a transparent methodology, enabling government, industry, researchers and regional bodies to track capability, identify structural change and assess the economic and workforce effects of future policy interventions.

04

Recommendation Four

National coordination authority and provenance infrastructure

A nationally recognised coordination authority should be established or designated to connect practitioner, product, provenance and producer-group infrastructure across the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector. Its functions should include persistent practitioner and product identifiers, national provenance records, a directory of place-based production, technical standards, producer-group development and coordination with relevant Commonwealth agencies, states, territories, industry and sector bodies.

The authority should maintain the common infrastructure through which verified records can be connected and reused across certification, procurement, geographical indications, market recognition, export and digital product systems. Specialist assessment functions should be delivered through appropriately qualified bodies and field-specific governance arrangements. Craftsmanship assessment, material verification, geographical-indication controls and cultural authority each require distinct expertise, standards and evidentiary processes, while remaining interoperable through shared identifiers and data architecture.

Registry governance should establish clear rules for the creation, amendment, verification and retention of records. It should define evidentiary status, version control, correction processes and the treatment of uncertainty or disputed information, and provide for continuity of records following business closure, succession or practitioner death. Public, commercial, personal and culturally restricted information should be managed through differentiated access and permissions.

Legislation and administrative instruments should define the authority's public functions, governance, accountability, review arrangements and relationships with existing industry and sector organisations. Technical standards should support interoperability while allowing field-specific systems to retain their own criteria, assessors and controls. This infrastructure should support both public administration and legitimate industry use.

Rights, permissions and access conditions attached to provenance records should remain persistent across connected systems, ensuring that information is reused consistently with the authority and terms under which it was supplied or verified.

The objective is to create durable national infrastructure through which verified practitioner, producer, product and provenance information can be maintained once, connected across legitimate uses and carried forward over time, strengthening administrative efficiency, market confidence, policy capability and the long-term evidentiary record of Australian craft production.

05 Recommendation Five

Craft and industrial geographical indications and producer readiness

The Australian Government should establish a coordinated producer-readiness pathway for Australian agricultural, food and spirit geographical indications and undertake dedicated consultation on protection for craft and industrial geographical indications. The pathway should connect trade, intellectual-property, agriculture, industry, regional-development, arts and First Nations policy responsibilities without treating food and beverage GIs and craft and industrial GIs as the same product category.

Producer-readiness support should help representative groups define the product, geographical area, production specification, relevant qualities or reputation, eligible producers, governance arrangements, compliance controls and evidence of the connection between product and place. Support should include historical and contemporary research, provenance documentation, specification drafting, legal and technical advice, producer engagement and preparation for examination and objection processes.

Consultation on craft and industrial geographical indications should examine the protection available through certification trade marks, the European Union's craft and industrial GI framework and the requirements of Australian practitioners, manufacturers and regional producer communities. It should define the relationship among qualifying place-linked product names, producer entitlement, craft knowledge, manufacturing processes and existing intellectual-property rights while providing for First Nations cultural authority and community governance.

Common provenance and producer records should support preparation and administration without changing the legal meaning of a geographical indication. Persistent identifiers may connect authorised producers, products, specifications and compliance records, but a practitioner credential, Maker's Mark, Craftsmanship Star Rating or general provenance record should not be represented as conferring geographical-indication entitlement.

Initial implementation should identify credible Australian candidates, test producer-group readiness and document the cost and time required to develop applications. Evaluation should record producer participation, governance capability, specification development, evidence quality, examination readiness and the accessibility of the pathway to small and regional producers.

06 Recommendation Six

Artisan production, craftsmanship assessment and Craftsmanship Star Rating

A national framework should distinguish Artisan Producer classification, practitioner and atelier recognition, product craftsmanship, provenance and the Craftsmanship Star Rating as related functions. Artisan Producer should apply specifically to qualifying small-scale agricultural, agrifood, craft food and beverage production under field-specific limits. Practitioner, atelier and Master recognition should identify capability and productive settings independently of a product rating.

The Craftsmanship Star Rating Framework in Appendix B should guide the development of a voluntary product labelling system that provides reliable, relevant and readily understood craftsmanship information to support informed purchasing and more sustainable choices. Its five public pillars are Provenance; Materials and impact; Durability; Repair and circularity; and Heritage and transmission, organised around one overall product rating out of five. Technical craftsmanship informs these pillars through material judgement, execution and fitness for purpose.

Product information should identify the work and contribution concerned and support comparisons between equivalent functions and conditions of use. Durable goods and consumables require questions appropriate to their materials and purpose. Provenance and Heritage and transmission should retain their distinct questions about knowledge lineage and continuing practice, while evidence gaps remain distinguishable from demonstrated weaknesses. Maker attribution, production origin, geographical entitlement, labour compliance and cultural authority should retain their respective evidence and decision requirements.

Further development should establish and test detailed assessment methods and conditions for using the mark through practitioner and industry consultation, appropriate specialist expertise, consumer research and product-field trials. The resulting Implementation Guide should draw on the Minimum Standards in Appendix A, including competent assessment, independence, conflict-of-interest controls, review and appeal, and proportionate access for smaller enterprises. Evaluation should examine the consistency and usefulness of the resulting information and whether the system improves consumer understanding.

07 Recommendation Seven

Craftsmanship, product identity and market integrity

A coordinated market-integrity framework should be established for Australian craft practitioners and enterprises, addressing product copying, counterfeiting, misleading craft claims and the practical enforcement barriers faced by micro and small producers. Existing copyright, registered design, trade mark and consumer-law protections should be made more accessible through clear, coordinated pathways tailored to craft and design enterprises.

Support should include guidance on applicable rights, evidence preservation, infringement reporting, specialist intellectual-property assistance and proportionate dispute and enforcement pathways. Major online marketplaces and social-commerce platforms should be incorporated into coordinated reporting and evidence protocols so that practitioners can act more efficiently where copied, counterfeit or misleadingly represented products are offered for sale.

Misleading use of terms such as handmade, artisan, crafted and equivalent representations should be addressed through substantiation requirements linked to the specific claim being made. Practitioner, production and provenance records should provide positive evidence of identity, contribution, materials, place and production stages. The Craftsmanship Star Rating Framework should support this work by giving buyers a recognisable display and a consistent structure for product information across its five public pillars, with supporting evidence appropriate to each claim (Appendix B).

Copyright, design rights, trade marks, consumer law, geographical indications, practitioner attribution and provenance should operate as connected protections around product identity, with each retaining its own legal or evidentiary function.

Implementation should include standard evidence protocols, referral pathways, specialist advisory capability and accessible mechanisms for escalating substantiated infringements. Common templates for recording authorship, design development, production evidence, provenance and first publication or market use should strengthen the evidentiary position of small enterprises before a dispute arises. Referral arrangements should connect practitioners with the appropriate regulatory, intellectual-property and enforcement channels.

The objective is to provide practitioners and small enterprises with repeatable pathways for protecting legitimate product identity, craftsmanship and provenance claims across physical and digital markets.

08 Recommendation Eight

First Nations cultural authority and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property

First Nations cultural knowledge, authority and heritage should be protected through a First Nations-led statutory framework guided by Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) rights. The Commonwealth's current development of stand-alone protection for traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions provides the national policy and legislative-development pathway, with First Nations expertise and lived experience shaping the scope, governance and operation of the proposed rights. The Office for the Arts (n.d.) identifies ICIP as the Australian term for the rights Indigenous peoples hold in their knowledge, cultural heritage and artistic and creative endeavours, including communally held knowledge passed between generations.

Protection should extend across relevant forms of knowledge and expression, including designs, symbols, language, performance, cultural objects, craft practices, ecological knowledge and other culturally governed material identified by the relevant First Nations peoples and communities.

Governance should embed free, prior and informed consent, self-determination, cultural integrity, attribution, privacy, secret and sacred knowledge, benefit sharing and community authority over the use and management of ICIP. Consent arrangements should record permitted uses, access conditions, attribution, storage, future use and benefit-sharing requirements, with culturally appropriate mechanisms for review, correction and continuing management of material incorporating ICIP (Department of Planning and Environment, 2023).

Provenance, certification, geographical-indication, registry and digital-product systems should be designed to recognise and give effect to these rights. First Nations knowledge holders and communities should determine what information may be recorded, verified, displayed, shared or withheld, and how cultural authority is represented within public and restricted-access records. Where commercialisation occurs, arrangements should support agreed attribution, remuneration, royalties or other negotiated benefits and continuing access to materials and outcomes incorporating ICIP.

Implementation should connect the stand-alone ICIP framework with relevant Commonwealth, state and territory systems, the Indigenous Art Code, cultural institutions and sector infrastructure through First Nations-led governance and clear referral pathways.

The objective is enduring legal and administrative protection that enables First Nations peoples to maintain, control, protect, develop and benefit from their cultural knowledge, heritage and expressions according to their own authority and cultural protocols.

09 Recommendation Nine

Intangible cultural heritage and endangered-craft monitoring

Australia should ratify the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and establish a national safeguarding framework aligned with its definitions, inventorying requirements and community-participation principles. Australia is currently not a State Party to the Convention. Ratification would provide an international framework for identifying, documenting, transmitting and revitalising living heritage through community-led mechanisms (UNESCO, n.d.-a, 2003).

The framework should give explicit effect to traditional craftsmanship, identified in Article 2.2(e) as one of the Convention's five broad domains of intangible cultural heritage. UNESCO's (n.d.-b) guidance emphasises that safeguarding traditional craftsmanship centres on the knowledge and skills through which craft is practised and transmitted. National policy should recognise practitioners, teachers, apprenticeships, workshops, material knowledge and transmission relationships as core safeguarding infrastructure (UNESCO, n.d.-b, 2003).

A national inventory of intangible cultural heritage should be established alongside a dedicated endangered-craft inventory capable of identifying transmission risk before capability is lost. Assessment should include practitioner and trainee numbers, workforce age, identified successors, access to teaching, workshops and equipment, material supply, regional concentration, continuing practice and market conditions. Inventorying should be community-led and capable of recognising the different cultural, occupational, regional and intergenerational settings through which living craft traditions are maintained and transmitted.

Risk classifications should connect directly to safeguarding action, including training, master–apprentice transmission, equipment and workshop access, material trials, succession planning, documentation and re-establishment of productive capability. The United Kingdom's Heritage Crafts Red List provides an operational precedent for linking evidence of vulnerability with targeted intervention (Heritage Crafts, 2025b).

National safeguarding should be supported by periodic reporting on transmission strength, emerging risks and changes in practitioner capability across recognised living-heritage practices. This evidence should inform education, workforce, heritage and regional-development policy, allowing endangered craft-trade capability to be identified early and connected with the institutions, practitioners and resources required for its continuation.

The objective is a permanent system that identifies living craft knowledge, monitors transmission risk and directs safeguarding resources to the people, places and relationships through which that knowledge continues.

10

Recommendation Ten

Craft learning, advanced practice and skills recognition

A coherent national craft and material-skills pathway should connect school, vocational, higher, workplace and community learning, with clear progression from introductory making through technical competence, advanced practice and transmission. The pathway should recognise craft as a productive capability requiring sustained access to materials, tools, equipment, specialist instruction and repeated practice.

School education should provide cumulative opportunities to develop material literacy, making skills, technical judgement and safe tool use across relevant learning areas. Vocational and higher education settings should maintain specialist workshops, equipment, technical staff and active delivery in fields where practical capability depends on sustained use of production infrastructure. Training policy should support delivery models that combine institutional teaching with workplace, studio, atelier and community-based learning.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), including recognition of current competency, should provide accessible pathways for experienced practitioners to have demonstrated capability formally recognised. Assessment should accommodate capability developed through employment, family workshops, informal apprenticeships, community transmission, overseas practice and other established routes to skilled work. Evidence requirements should focus on demonstrated competence, documented practice and field-appropriate assessment (ASQA, 2025).

Advanced practitioner progression should establish visible recognition beyond initial occupational competence. Australian pathways should draw on the institutional lessons of Meister and comparable master-level systems by recognising advanced technical capability, professional judgement, leadership, enterprise responsibility and contribution to transmission. Recognition should remain accessible through multiple evidence routes and be aligned with field-specific standards.

Participation measures should strengthen entry, retention and progression for women and other groups underrepresented in particular skilled occupations and material fields. Workforce planning should track access to training, completion, advanced progression, workplace opportunities, regional availability and access to specialist facilities across Australia.

The objective is a continuous national skills architecture through which people can discover craft capability, develop it to advanced levels, have existing expertise recognised and move into employment, enterprise, teaching and transmission, while maintaining the workshops, practitioners and learning environments on which practical capability depends.

11

Recommendation Eleven

National craft-trade development, scholarship and transmission program

A national craft-trade development intermediary should complement the education and skills architecture by funding specialist development, advanced practice and transmission across a practitioner's career. Its purpose should be to connect individual capability with employment, trade, enterprise and the continuation of specialist knowledge.

The program should provide emerging-practitioner grants, specialist scholarships, funded apprenticeships and one-to-one training with advanced practitioners. Support should extend to bespoke combinations of formal, workplace and community-based learning, professional networks, commissions, collaboration and public presentation. Funding should recognise the full cost of advanced material learning, including practitioner time, materials, travel, specialist tools, equipment and access to workshops or production facilities.

The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust (QEST) demonstrates the value of a sustained development continuum. QEST (n.d.-a) reports that it has awarded more than £7.5 million to over 900 makers and conservators across 130 disciplines since 1990. Its current impact summary reports that 92 per cent of alumni from the last ten years are still practising and that 72 per cent of alumni now teach or train others (QEST, n.d.-b). Its model also provides a structured mechanism through which philanthropic and commercial investment can support both individual practitioners and wider sector capability (QEST, n.d.-a, n.d.-b).

An Australian program should adapt this function to domestic workforce, regional and industry settings, combining public investment with philanthropic, industry and commercial participation. Scholarships and advanced-practice support should be linked to recognised fields of practice, workforce need, transmission risk and productive opportunity.

Career discovery, specialist development, apprenticeship, professional connection, enterprise formation, external investment and transmission should be treated as connected stages within a craft-trade career. The program should track practitioner progression, continued practice, teaching and apprenticeship outcomes, enterprise formation, regional capability and the transfer of specialist skills between generations.

The objective is a durable national mechanism that develops practitioners, strengthens craft as trade, attracts external investment and supports advanced capability being carried forward through productive work and transmission.

12

Recommendation Twelve

Craft-trade enterprise development, innovation and succession

A national craft-trade enterprise development pathway should support practitioner-led businesses and specialist productive enterprises from formation through growth, innovation and succession. Support should be structured around enterprise maturity and productive need, recognising that craft-trade businesses combine commercial capability with specialist materials, equipment, technical knowledge and skilled labour.

Early-stage incubation should integrate workspace and equipment access with business formation, costing, pricing, market testing and customer development. Established enterprises should have access to specialist acceleration in financial management, production planning, procurement, wholesale, export readiness, investment and workforce development. Productive networks should enable independent practitioners and firms to combine capability for larger commissions, contracts, regional supply chains and production opportunities.

Applied innovation should connect craft-trade enterprises with designers, manufacturers, researchers, technical facilities and buyers for prototyping, testing, process improvement and commercialisation. Access to research and technology infrastructure, shared equipment and specialist expertise should be incorporated where these resources can increase productivity, quality or market capability.

Design & Crafts Council Ireland's Business & Innovation Academy provides an international precedent for tailored foundation, growth and accelerator support for craft enterprises, combining commercial skills, mentoring, market development and sector-specific knowledge (DCCI, n.d.-a). An Australian pathway should adapt this function to domestic industry and regional settings and connect it with existing small-business, manufacturing, innovation and export programs.

Succession should be treated as productive-capability transfer. Support should cover business valuation, finance, premises, machinery, intellectual property, supplier and customer relationships, workforce continuity and staged transfer of technical knowledge. Succession planning should begin before business exit and provide pathways for employees, apprentices, family members or new owners to acquire viable enterprises and retain specialist capability.

Performance should be measured through enterprise formation and survival, revenue and market development, productive investment, collaboration, innovation, retained jobs and skills, successful succession and continued use of specialist infrastructure. The objective is a durable craft-trade enterprise system in which business development, productive capability and transmission reinforce one another across the enterprise lifecycle.

13

Recommendation Thirteen

Regional craft-trade centres and shared infrastructure

A nationally connected system of regional craft-trade infrastructure should link existing studios, workshops, guilds, training providers, productive enterprises and specialist facilities with higher-capability Regional Centres for Craftsmanship. The system should build from existing working infrastructure and strengthen the places in which craft skills are practised, transmitted, developed and applied commercially.

Local Centres for Craftsmanship should provide accessible practice and transmission points through studios, guilds, workshops and community or industry organisations. Regional Centres should perform a broader infrastructure role, combining advanced teaching, specialist equipment, practitioner networks, enterprise development, conservation and repair capability, producer-group support and regional capability mapping. Recognition should reflect demonstrated function, facilities, practitioner expertise, continuing activity and regional reach.

The Austrian Regional Centres for Craftsmanship provide an international safeguarding precedent. In 2016, UNESCO (2016) selected the model for its Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, recognising the role of Werkraum Bregenzerwald, Hand.Werk.Haus Salzkammergut and Textiles Zentrum Haslach in connecting craftspeople with education, business, research and public participation while sustaining specialist skills and regional productive traditions.

Australian regional centres should also connect with research and technology infrastructure where innovation, testing, prototyping or production scale-up is required. Universities, TAFEs, research organisations, manufacturers, pilot facilities and specialist testing environments should operate as network partners according to their capability rather than being subsumed into a single institutional model.

Operating support should recognise teaching, coordination, equipment maintenance, practitioner time and productive use as core infrastructure costs. Regional investment should strengthen continuing capability rather than treating facilities as stand-alone capital assets.

The objective is a tiered national craft-trade infrastructure in which local practice sites, regional capability hubs and research and industrial facilities remain distinct but connected, providing pathways from learning and transmission through advanced practice, enterprise, innovation and productive scale.



“We are not just preserving heritage—but recognising crafts as a driver of sustainability, identity, and economic resilience.”

Laura Miguel Baumann
Secretary General, European Crafts Alliance
Crafting Europe Manifesto 2025

14 Recommendation Fourteen

Productive capability, Australian textiles, procurement and market development

A national productive-capability framework should recognise craft-trade manufacturing as part of Australia's industrial, economic-resilience and regional-development agenda. The Future Made in Australia National Interest Framework provides a relevant assessment lens through its Economic Resilience and Security Stream, which considers where domestic capability is important to resilience and where supply concentration or disruption creates material national risk (Treasury, 2024).

Capability assessment should follow complete material and production chains, identifying critical processing stages, specialist machinery, maintenance capability, workforce depth, training capacity, alternative suppliers, research and technology infrastructure and continuing market demand. This approach should be applied across priority craft-trade fields, with Australian fibre and textile production used as an early demonstrator because the gap between domestic raw-material production and finished-cloth capability is already measurable.

A national textile capability pathway should map and strengthen the stages required to move Australian fibres through processing, spinning, weaving or knitting, dyeing, finishing, testing and finished-product manufacture. Investment should connect plant, skills, research capability and commercial demand, including shared facilities, specialist equipment, workforce development, procurement and industry partnerships capable of supporting viable production volumes.

Government procurement should make greater use of verified information about Australian production, product performance, repairability, provenance, material impacts and capability retention, consistent with Commonwealth Procurement Rules (Department of Finance, 2025a) and international obligations. The CSR Framework can inform questions about product qualities and supporting information, alongside the separate evidence required for Australian origin, labour compliance and other procurement conditions. Heritage procurement should similarly incorporate the specialist workforce and material knowledge required for long-term conservation and maintenance.

Market development should connect productive capability with buyer demand, certification, verified origin and useful information before purchase. For textiles, the Craftsmanship Star Rating Framework in Appendix B connects consumer awareness with provenance, material choices, durability, repair and the living knowledge behind making. Its preventative approach also directs attention upstream to decisions that can reduce avoidable harms, premature failure and waste. Supporting information should continue to identify Australian origin, production stages and other legal or regulatory claims separately.

The objective is resilient Australian productive capability that converts domestic materials, specialist knowledge, infrastructure and research into viable craft-trade production, stronger regional supply chains, durable products and sustained industrial capability.

15 Recommendation Fifteen

Provenance, digital interoperability and export readiness

Building on the national provenance infrastructure proposed in Recommendation Four, a technical interoperability standard should establish persistent identifiers and structured, exportable records for practitioners, producers, products, materials and production stages across the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector.

Practitioner, producer and product identity should remain separately identifiable while operating through connected records. The Unique Provenance Identifier (UPI) model described by the Creative Women's Association provides a sector-led example of persistent practitioner identification linking practitioner, product, certification and provenance records (Creative Women's Association, n.d.-a). National adoption would require assessment against published governance and technical requirements. Product-level identifiers should similarly connect to the relevant maker, producer, material, process, place and assessment records through a common technical architecture.

Digital Product Passport interoperability should be built into this system as an export and market-access capability. Australian records should allow verified product information associated with the CSR to be reused where it corresponds with an adopted passport requirement, including relevant product identity, composition, maintenance, repair, reuse or recovery information. The five pillars should not be represented as five settled mandatory Digital Product Passport categories. Material origin, production location, certification, geographical indication and the overall rating should remain separately identified data fields.

Public access should be claim-specific and useful before purchase, making the product identity, claim, scope and supporting information clear. CSR presentation should follow the principles in Appendix B, with detailed assessment and mark-use requirements developed in the separate Implementation Guide. Commercial, personal and culturally restricted information should remain subject to permissions and access controls. Governance should preserve continuity, version history and evidentiary status as records and requirements change.

Implementation should be coordinated by the national authority proposed in Recommendation Four, working with the Commonwealth industry and trade portfolios, standards bodies, exporters and relevant technology providers. During 2026–2027, the first stage should map practitioner identifiers, product identifiers and provenance records against emerging European passport requirements and technical standards, identifying evidence gaps, access permissions and interoperability needs. A textiles exporter pilot should then test data exchange with European buyers and passport systems, drawing on the productive-capability and materials demonstrators proposed in Recommendations Fourteen and Seventeen. Following adoption of the applicable product-specific requirements, the pathway should support routine transfer of verified product data within the prescribed transition periods. Evaluation should assess data accuracy, interoperability, exporter costs and accessibility for small enterprises, with updates as requirements change.

The objective is to ensure Australian provenance evidence can travel reliably across domestic certification, procurement, export and regulatory systems, including emerging Digital Product Passport and digital-trade requirements.

16 Recommendation Sixteen

International research, innovation and standards participation

A durable international research, innovation and standards pathway should connect the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector with European and other international research, industry and policy networks. Horizon Europe provides the immediate mechanism for this engagement, with Australian entities able to apply for Pillar II opportunities from 1 January 2027 under transitional arrangements while Australia completes the treaty process. Current implementation planning includes a proposed National Contact Point (NCP) network intended to be nationally accessible and consistent (DISR, 2026a, 2026b).

The NCP architecture should include expertise capable of working across cultural heritage, creative industries, advanced manufacturing, materials, circular production, regional development and industry participation. Craft-trade enterprises, SMEs, not-for-profits, producer groups, museums, training institutions, regional organisations and industry bodies should have access to opportunity intelligence, partner brokerage, consortium development, proposal support and continuing international relationship-building.

Participation should also connect Australian practitioners and enterprises with research and technology infrastructure, testing and demonstration facilities, producer networks and specialist institutions capable of supporting innovation, skills transmission, product development and commercialisation. Sector-to-sector relationships should be treated as strategic infrastructure, enabling Australian capability to enter international consortia through established institutional networks.

International research engagement should support interoperability with emerging product, provenance and market systems. Relevant projects should connect Australian work on geographical indications, Digital Product Passports, persistent identifiers, craftsmanship assessment, circular production and verified origin with corresponding international standards, regulatory developments and technical frameworks.

The 2027 Horizon Europe work program provides an immediate pipeline across cultural heritage, circular craft, textile and advanced manufacturing, repair and refurbishment, materials and intangible cultural heritage. Australian participation should build capability that persists beyond individual grants through enduring partnerships, specialist skills, infrastructure access, commercial pathways and influence on future research priorities (European Commission, 2025d, 2025e).

The objective is an internationally connected craft-trade sector able to participate in collaborative research, shape relevant standards and policy discussions, translate research into productive capability and retain long-term value in Australia through stronger institutions, enterprises, skills and international networks.

17

Recommendation Seventeen

Staged National Craft × Innovation and Preventative Materials Program

This review did not identify an explicit national, cross-material pathway connecting authorised craft-held material and process knowledge with scientific characterisation, testing and manufacturing translation. The national review of research and development describes an atomised system with weak coordination and translation into Australian products and industries (Strategic Examination of R&D Independent Expert Panel, 2025). Relevant craft knowledge is dispersed across practitioners, First Nations communities, growers, workshops and small manufacturers.

The EU-funded ekip project's policy-development process identifies outdated perceptions, weak cross-sector connections, inadequate infrastructure, limited data and restricted access to innovation finance as barriers to crafts-led innovation (ekip, 2025; Malmström, 2025). Deakin University and the University of Queensland's spinifex research demonstrate relevant Australian capability, while the proposed Future Textiles CRC could provide a platform for parts of this agenda. The initiatives reviewed do not by themselves establish the national, cross-material pathway proposed here.

The Australian Government should establish a staged National Craft × Innovation and Preventative Materials Program, led through the Commonwealth industry portfolio in partnership with the environment and arts portfolios. Its first phase should be a textiles demonstrator involving craft-sector representatives, First Nations organisations and cultural knowledge holders, researchers, producers and manufacturers. It should use existing research and manufacturing facilities and complement, rather than duplicate, the proposed Future Textiles CRC.

Funded research should begin with a defined material or production proposition and recognise practitioner and knowledge-holder participation as a research cost. Cultural authority, consent, attribution, intellectual property and benefit sharing should be agreed before knowledge is recorded or tested. Material source, preparation and provenance should remain connected to assessment of performance, safety, exposure, environmental effect, durability, repairability and end-of-life behaviour, followed by prototyping and pilot manufacture.

Claims of reduced impacts should be tested against defined comparators delivering equivalent functions, with lifecycle boundaries and uncertainty reported.

Expansion beyond textiles should depend on independent evaluation of authorised participation, fair remuneration, verified material findings, viable prototypes, manufacturing trials, avoided chemical or environmental impacts and credible pathways into Australian production. Demonstrated results would support later application to ceramics, timber, leather, glass, pigments, food and building materials.

18 Recommendation Eighteen

Migrant craft skills, workforce participation and enterprise development

A national migrant craft-skills pathway should connect recognition of existing capability with paid employment, enterprise development and transmission. It should enable practitioners with experience acquired overseas, through family workshops or in Australian workplaces, to apply their skills within domestic production and develop them through continuing practice.

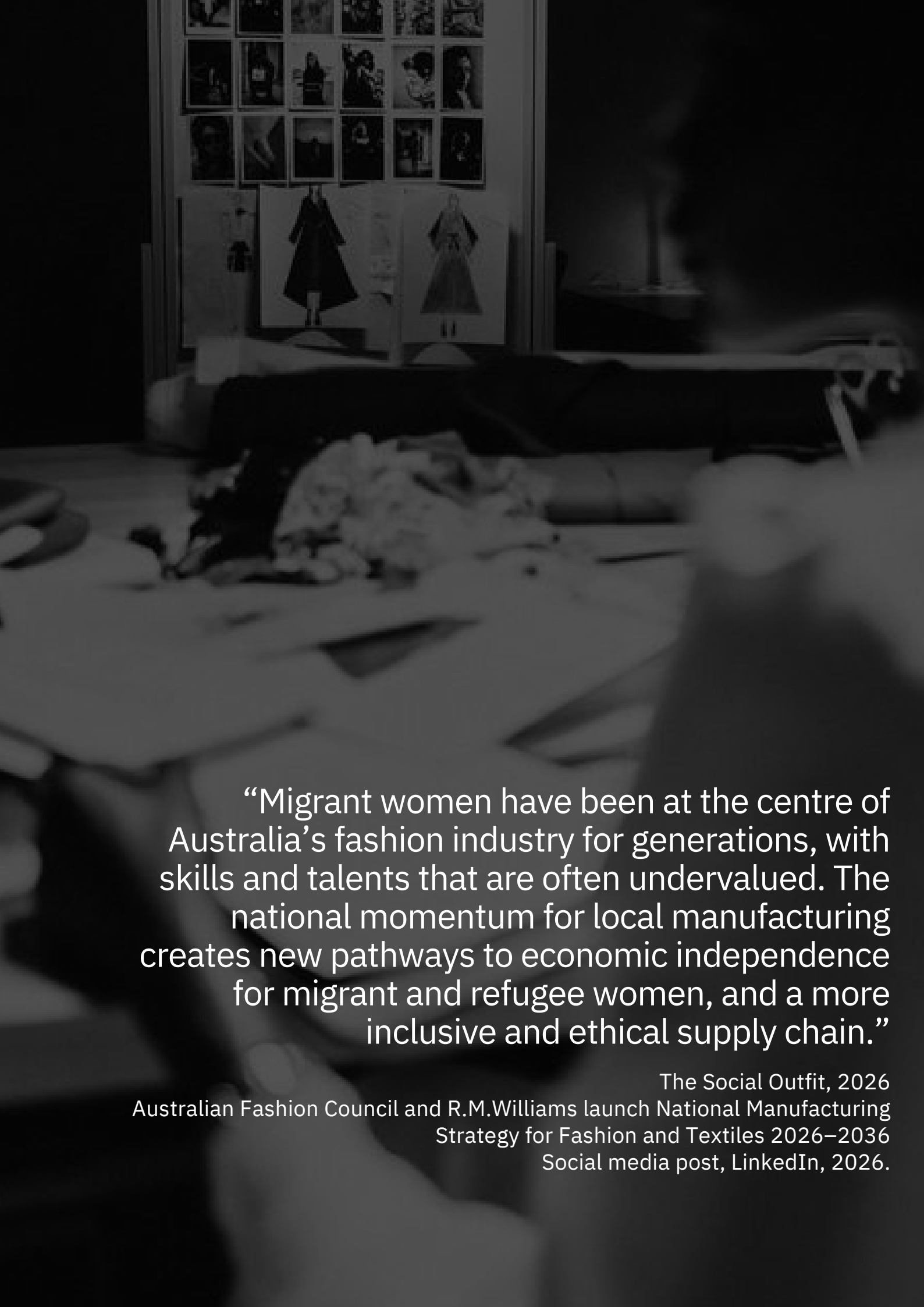
The Australian Government, working with state and territory governments, skills-assessment bodies, training providers and employers, should establish practical assessment routes identifying demonstrated capability, consequential technical judgement and any additional Australian safety, licensing or regulatory requirements. Assessment should accommodate documented work, demonstrations, portfolios and workplace observation, with accessible recognition of prior learning and current competency (Jobs and Skills Australia, 2026b).

Bridging training should address specific gaps between demonstrated capability and the requirements of Australian practice, including equipment, technical terminology, workplace safety and applicable standards. Workplace English should be integrated with practical training and paid employment where feasible, with proficiency requirements proportionate to the duties and safety responsibilities involved.

Employment pathways should connect practitioners with workshops, ateliers and manufacturing enterprises through defined duties, suitable supervision, lawful remuneration and opportunities for continuing work. Delivery should include accessible information about employment rights and referral arrangements addressing underpayment, misclassification, unpaid trials and visa-related coercion, including within small enterprises and outwork.

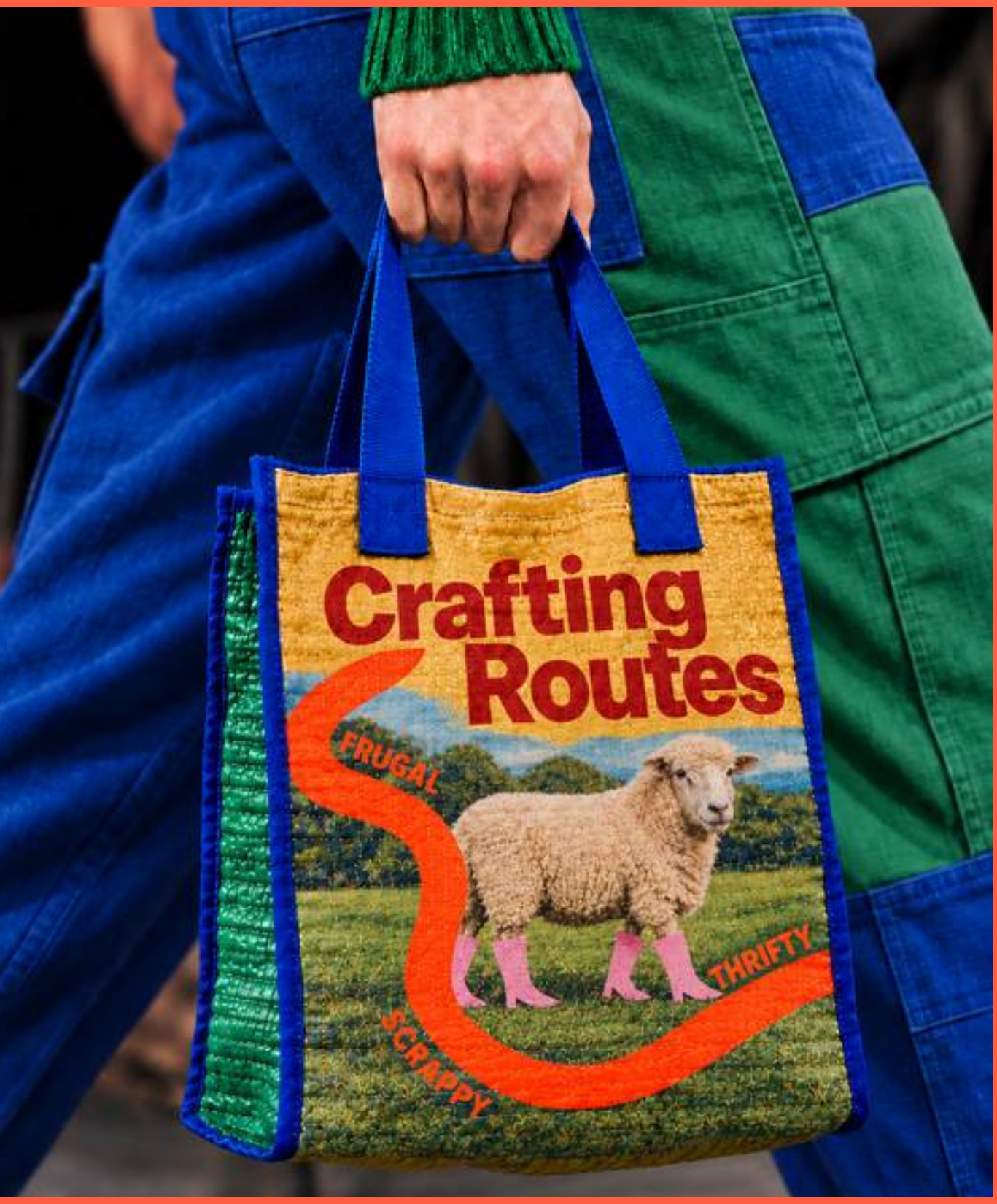
Enterprise assistance should support migrant practitioners establishing or developing studios, workshops and small manufacturing businesses. Advice should cover registration, costing, finance, premises, licensing and commercial networks, delivered through accessible formats and language support. Experienced practitioners should have paid opportunities to teach, mentor and supervise learners, connecting their capability with the national skills, scholarship and regional infrastructure arrangements.

Evaluation should measure recognised capability, employment aligned with skills, retention, progression, enterprise formation and survival, and participation in transmission. Voluntary information about migration background and prior experience should be collected with informed consent and appropriate privacy controls. These measures should show whether the pathway strengthens domestic productive capability and enables specialist knowledge to continue through employment, enterprise and learning.



“Migrant women have been at the centre of Australia’s fashion industry for generations, with skills and talents that are often undervalued. The national momentum for local manufacturing creates new pathways to economic independence for migrant and refugee women, and a more inclusive and ethical supply chain.”

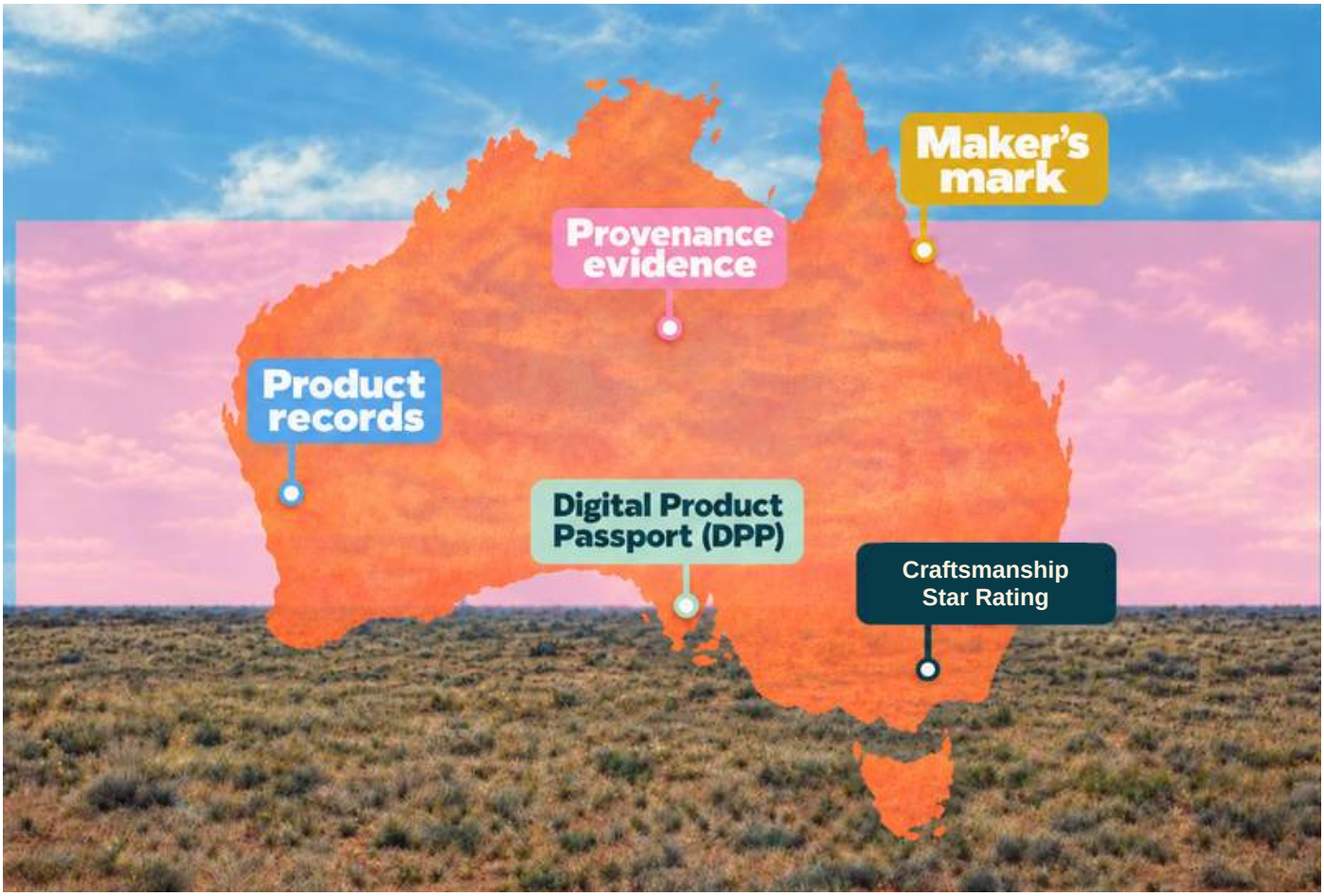
The Social Outfit, 2026
Australian Fashion Council and R.M.Williams launch National Manufacturing Strategy for Fashion and Textiles 2026–2036
Social media post, LinkedIn, 2026.



Crafting routes to a circular economy | Australian Crafts Alliance

“Integrating circular economy concepts with craftsmanship helps address sustainability challenges, preserve cultural heritage and foster local economic development.”

European Commission, n.d.
Horizon Europe—Crafting routes to a circular economy
HORIZON-CL2-2027-01-HERITAGE-03



Distinct records, complementary functions | Image: Australian Crafts Alliance



Cultural integrity and heritage | Image: Australian Crafts Alliance

Glossary

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics, the national statistical agency.
ACA	Australian Crafts Alliance.
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.
ACCC	Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, responsible for competition and consumer law and for examining the rules of certification trade marks.
AEU	Australian Education Union.
AHRC	Australian Human Rights Commission.
AHRI	Australian HR Institute.
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.
Ai Group	Australian Industry Group.
ANZSCO	Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations. Australia replaced ANZSCO with OSCA for national statistical use in December 2024; New Zealand continues to use its own occupational classification arrangements.
ANZSIC	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification, used to classify businesses and economic activity by principal industry.
Artisan Producer	An individual or enterprise engaged in small-scale agricultural, agrifood, craft food or beverage production, within applicable field-specific scale or volume limits, while retaining direct responsibility for one or more consequential stages of production. The classification applies specifically within agricultural and agrifood fields and may connect qualifying producers with place-based producer groups and geographical-indication development.
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority.
Australian Craft and Provenance Sector	The trade, industry, workforce and living-heritage sector comprising Craft Practitioners and enterprises engaged in craft, together with the workshops, ateliers, institutions, material and production systems, markets and transmission relationships through which tangible craft products are made, modified, repaired, conserved, taught and brought into circulation.
BIBB	Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, Germany.
BMBFSFJ	Bundesministerium für Bildung, Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, a German federal ministry.
CCA	See Certified Craft Atelier.
CCP	See Certified Craft Practitioner.

Glossary (continued)

Centres for Craftsmanship	In the Australian Crafts Alliance framework, existing working sites, including studios, guild spaces, workshops and community organisations, where craft is regularly practised and taught, recognised without requiring the construction of new facilities. Minimum functions centre on recurring teaching, transmission, documentation and public accessibility, with participating sites connected through a national network. The model is informed by UNESCO’s Regional Centres for Craftsmanship in Austria.
Certification Trade Mark	A trade mark registered under the Trade Marks Act 1995 (Cth) that verifies compliance with approved rules. In Australia, geographical indications other than wine may be protected as certification trade marks, and the ACCC examines the rules of each one. Wine geographical indications are protected through a separate statutory system.
Certified Craft Atelier	A proposed credential recognising a workshop, enterprise or place that sustains appropriate field-specific conditions for practice, production and transmission.
Certified Craft Practitioner	A proposed credential recognising an individual practitioner’s demonstrated field-specific practical capability and knowledge. It is separate from assessment of an individual product’s craftsmanship.
Certified Master Craftsperson	A proposed advanced practitioner credential recognising field capability together with demonstrated stewardship, leadership and responsibility for transmission.
CIGI	Craft and Industrial Geographical Indication, the European Union public collective intellectual-property right established by Regulation (EU) 2023/2411 for the registered name of a craft or industrial product whose given quality, reputation or other characteristic is essentially attributable to its geographical origin. At least one production step must take place within the defined area. The right is legally distinct from the European Union regimes for agricultural products and foodstuffs, wines and spirit drinks.
Collective Trade Mark	A registered mark owned by an association and used by its members to distinguish their goods or services from those of non-members.
Craft	The material practice of making, modifying, repairing or conserving tangible products through the handling, transformation, assembly or treatment of materials, ingredients or existing objects. The term also denotes the fields in which that practice occurs and the products that result. Processes may be manual, tool-assisted, digital or mechanical. Classification as craft requires substantive application of learned material knowledge and practical skill within the process and does not by itself determine the level of craftsmanship demonstrated.
Craft as Trade	Skilled productive practice operating within economic and workforce systems through employment, enterprise, commission, production and exchange, in which material knowledge, technical capability and consequential human judgement contribute directly to productive activity. The term provides a cross-sector economic and workforce frame and does not require every instance of craft practice to be commercially undertaken.
Craft Conservation	The conservation, safeguarding and renewal of the tangible and intangible conditions through which craft capability is maintained and transmitted. It encompasses practitioner knowledge, skill and judgement; transmission relationships; materials, tools, workshops and practice-specific standards; and the tangible objects through which that capability is expressed, maintained, repaired or restored. The term is used in an expanded operational sense.

Glossary (continued)

Craft Conservator	A practitioner or conservation specialist whose work contributes to the continuity of craft capability through the conservation, restoration, repair, documentation, practice or transmission of craft knowledge, skills, processes and tangible manifestations. The term describes a function within the craft ecosystem and does not displace established professional conservation-restoration qualifications, accreditation or occupational titles.
Craft Practitioner	A person actively engaged in a field of craft, including making, modifying, repairing or conserving products; undertaking one or more consequential stages of production; or transmitting the knowledge and skills of a practice where that transmission is grounded in practical capability. The term describes participation rather than occupational status, rank or a guarantee of quality. A Craft Practitioner may work commercially or non-commercially, use manual, digital or mechanical processes, and be at any stage of practice or professional development.
Craftsmanship	The demonstrable quality of making that arises when learned and embodied knowledge is applied through skilled human judgement at one or more consequential stages of making, modifying, repairing or conserving a product, including through the transformation, assembly or treatment of materials, ingredients or existing objects, such that the practitioner’s judgement materially affects the process or outcome. Craftsmanship is assessed against standards recognised within the relevant practice. It does not require novelty, sole authorship, exclusive hand-making, small-scale production or the absence of machinery.
Craftsmanship Star Rating	A proposed voluntary product labelling system that organises consumer information for a defined product, batch or consistently specified product line. Five public pillars are organised around one overall product rating out of five: Provenance; Materials and impact; Durability; Repair and circularity; and Heritage and transmission. The rating does not confer a personal title or whole-enterprise endorsement.
CRC	Cooperative Research Centre.
CRDC	Cotton Research and Development Corporation.
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.
CSR	See Craftsmanship Star Rating.
CWA	Creative Women’s Association, secretariat of the Australian Crafts Alliance.
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.
DCCI	Design & Crafts Council Ireland.
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
Digital Product Passport	A structured, machine-readable product-information record established under the European Union’s Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation. Requirements commence by product group through delegated acts. Textiles and apparel are a priority group, with the relevant delegated act planned for 2027 and product obligations commencing after the transition period specified by that act.
DISR	Department of Industry, Science and Resources.
DPP	See Digital Product Passport.

Glossary (continued)

ESPR	Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation, the European Union regulation under which the Digital Product Passport is established.
EU	European Union.
EUIPO	European Union Intellectual Property Office, administrator of European Union trade marks and the register for Craft and Industrial Geographical Indications.
Geographical Indication	A name or sign identifying a good as originating in a specific region where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is attributable to that geographical origin. It protects the name for qualifying goods. It does not identify an individual maker or establish craftsmanship unless relevant requirements form part of the applicable product specification and are verified. Registration is legally separate from a provenance registry.
GI	See Geographical Indication.
GVA	Gross value added.
Heritage Crafts Red List	The United Kingdom’s assessment of crafts by Heritage Crafts, using four categories of risk, practitioner and trainee numbers, and evidence about training opportunities, markets and other conditions affecting future transmission. The report cites it as an operational precedent for linking evidence of vulnerability with targeted intervention.
Horizon Europe	The European Union’s research and innovation programme. From 1 January 2027, Australian entities will be able to apply for Pillar II opportunities, including the Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society cluster, under transitional arrangements (see Recommendation Sixteen).
ICIP	Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property, encompassing the rights and responsibilities of First Nations peoples in traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, cultural heritage and associated material.
ILO	International Labour Organization.
Intangible Cultural Heritage	In UNESCO’s treatment, traditional craftsmanship is intangible cultural heritage located primarily in practitioners’ knowledge and skills rather than in craft products alone. The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage includes transmission among its recognised safeguarding measures.
JORF	Journal officiel de la République française, the official journal of the French Republic.
JSA	Jobs and Skills Australia.
Maker’s Mark	A unique and persistent individual identifier assigned to a verified Craft Practitioner and applied to, or securely associated with, a tangible product, its packaging, accompanying documentation or provenance record. It attributes that practitioner’s contribution. Within the proposed registry, the practitioner record receives a Unique Provenance Identifier and the Maker’s Mark is the practitioner-facing expression of that identifier. A product may carry several Maker’s Marks. The mark alone does not certify quality, geographical origin, materials, production method or craftsmanship.

Glossary (continued)

Meister	A qualification in the German system of regulated crafts that brings together advanced practice, enterprise capability and authority to train apprentices, supported by chambers, examinations and recognised progression. Austria also uses the Meister qualification.
METI	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan.
MEXT	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan.
MIMIT	Ministero delle Imprese e del Made in Italy, Italy.
MISA	Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance.
MOE Singapore	Ministry of Education, Singapore.
NCP	National Contact Point, a proposed network in Australia's Horizon Europe implementation planning (see Recommendation Sixteen).
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research.
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
OSCA	Occupation Standard Classification for Australia, introduced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in December 2024 for Australian occupational statistics.
PDO	Protected Designation of Origin, a European agricultural origin category requiring all relevant production stages to occur within the defined area.
Product provenance record	A linked record identifying a work, model, line, batch or lot and documenting the evidence supporting its materials or ingredients, makers or producers, production stages, places, methods, knowledge lineage, subsequent history and any assessed claims.
Provenance	The documented chain, supported by evidence whose verification status is recorded, connecting a tangible product or object to its materials or ingredients, maker or producer, place and method of production; the lineage through which the knowledge and skills required to make it were acquired and transmitted; and its subsequent distribution, ownership, custody and use, together with its documented oral histories and cultural meanings. A provenance registry records these connections, their supporting evidence and any gaps, disputes or uncertainty.
QEST	Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust, United Kingdom.
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning, the framework through which skills acquired through training, work and life experience can be assessed against a nationally recognised training product. Evidence may include work samples, training records and employer references.
Safeguarding	The continuation of the living knowledge that makes future craft work possible: the skills of practitioners, the conditions of practice and the transmission through which craft remains alive. Adapted from UNESCO.

Glossary (continued)

SERI	State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation, Switzerland.
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise.
SMEA	Small and Medium Enterprise Agency, Japan.
Southern Cross Mark	An industry-developed mark proposed for specified craft and provenance claims. Use as a registered certification trade mark would depend on approved rules and registration.
Southern Cross Registry	The industry-led registry developed to hold Unique Provenance Identifiers for verified practitioner records and linked product provenance records.
SWDA	Skills and Workforce Development Agency, Singapore.
TAFE	Technical and Further Education, Australia’s public vocational education and training institutions.
Transmission	The process through which knowledge and skills are communicated, learned, embodied, renewed and passed between practitioners and across generations. It may occur through apprenticeship, teaching, observation, demonstration, supervised practice, oral instruction, documentation or participation in a community of practice. Transmission is distinct from the capability being transmitted. It is essential to safeguarding at community and sector levels and is not a necessary condition for determining whether an individual product demonstrates craftsmanship.
UA	Universities Australia.
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
Unique Provenance Identifier	See UPI.
UPI	Unique Provenance Identifier, the persistent identifier assigned to a verified practitioner record within the Southern Cross Registry. A Maker’s Mark is the practitioner-facing expression of that identifier when applied to, or securely associated with, a product.
VET	Vocational education and training.
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization, the United Nations agency responsible for international intellectual-property administration.
ZDH	Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks, the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts.

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A

Minimum Standards

AUSTRALIAN CRAFTS ALLIANCE
Secretariat: Creative Women's Association



MINIMUM STANDARDS

FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CRAFT AND PROVENANCE SECTOR

A framework for recognising, documenting and assessing craft, transmission, craftsmanship, provenance and craft and industrial products

2026

Background

The Australian Crafts Alliance (ACA) publishes these Minimum Standards as an industry framework for the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector. The sector comprises craft practice, production, repair, conservation and the transmission of skill, together with the craft and industrial products that result from that work.

The Standards describe baseline conditions for craft, transmission, craftsmanship, provenance and craft and industrial products to be recognised, documented and assessed within Australian systems. They are drafted so that they can be applied by organisations and practitioners of different size, discipline and location.

The Standards are voluntary. They confer no statutory status, registration, funding or authority over another practitioner or community. They operate alongside existing Australian law and existing occupational, heritage, consumer and intellectual property frameworks, and are intended to support consultation on policy and legislation.

Where these Standards refer to instruments administered by the Australian Crafts Alliance or the Creative Women's Association, each is identified as an existing industry instrument or as a proposed sector standard. Any future statutory function is a matter for the Australian Government and the legislative process.

These Minimum Standards provide the overarching sector framework. The Craftsmanship Star Rating Framework sets out the CSR's purpose, product scope, five public pillars, consumer information principles and preventative craftsmanship approach. Detailed assessment methods and conditions for using the CSR mark will be developed and tested before publication in a separate Implementation Guide.

These Minimum Standards are an industry framework. Endorsement is voluntary and confers no statutory status, registration, funding or authority over another practitioner or community.

The Framework

These Standards rest on four terms. Each names a different thing, and that determines which instrument applies at which point. Part A and Part B of the proposed Australian Craft and Provenance Bill follow the same order.

Transmission. Transmission is the passing of craft skill, method and material knowledge between people. It encompasses apprenticeship, teaching, observation, demonstration, supervised practice, oral instruction, documentation and communities of practice. Transmission describes how capability moves between practitioners and between generations, and is distinct from the assessment of craftsmanship in any particular work.

Craftsmanship. Craftsmanship is the demonstrable quality of making that arises when learned and embodied knowledge is applied through skilled human judgement at one or more consequential stages of making, modifying, repairing or conserving a product, including through the transformation, assembly or treatment of materials, ingredients or existing objects, such that the practitioner's judgement materially affects the process or outcome. Craftsmanship is evaluative: it describes a standard that work meets, rather than a category of activity or a class of person.

Provenance. Provenance is the documented record of a work and the evidence supporting it. A provenance record may address materials and ingredients; the maker or producer; place; method; transmission lineage; subsequent ownership, custody and use; and associated oral histories and cultural meanings. A provenance record also states its evidence gaps and the degree of uncertainty attaching to each element.

Level	Term	What it describes	Reference points and instruments
1	**Transmission**	The process through which skill, method and material knowledge are learned, renewed and passed between practitioners and generations.	UNESCO 2003 Convention, Domain 5 · apprenticeship, VET and workplace pathways
2	**Craftsmanship**	The demonstrable quality of making, assessed against defined criteria at consequential stages of making, modifying, repairing or conserving work. Evaluative rather than a category of activity.	Practitioner capability and productive settings: proposed Certified Craft Practitioner (CCP) and Certified Craft Atelier (CCA) credentials. Product quality and consumer information: Craftsmanship Star Rating Framework, covering five public pillars and an overall product rating out of five. Practitioner and atelier recognition remain separate from the product rating.
3	**Provenance**	The documented record of materials, maker, place, method, transmission lineage, custody and cultural meaning, with evidence gaps stated.	Existing industry identifiers and registry: practitioner Unique Provenance Identifier, Maker's Mark and Southern Cross Registry. Southern Cross Mark: proposed registered certification trade mark use, subject to approved rules and registration.
4	**Craft and industrial products**	The tangible output, including goods entering domestic and export markets.	Geographical indications, including craft and industrial geographical indications (CIGIs) · Digital Product Passport requirements · the proposed Bill

Transmission describes how capability is learned, renewed and passed on. Craftsmanship describes the standard the resulting work meets. Provenance describes the record documenting both in relation to a particular work. Craft and industrial products are the tangible output to which all three apply.

The Minimum Standards

1

Sector recognition

Craft practice, production, repair, conservation and transmission should be recognised as skilled economic and cultural activity. That recognition should extend across workforce classification, industry policy, procurement, heritage, education and statistical systems, so that the sector is visible in the systems that already govern comparable forms of work.

The sector operates across arts, industry, heritage, construction, food, education and other domains. Recognition within one system should complement recognition within another.

2

Transmission

Teaching, mentoring, demonstration and supervised practice should be recognised and resourced as skilled work.

Transmission settings should provide competent practitioners to teach, safe and suitable facilities, appropriate materials and tools, and sufficient time for a learner to develop capability. Transmission includes apprenticeship, teaching, observation, demonstration, supervised practice, oral instruction, documentation and communities of practice, and may be recorded so that lineage can be described where a practitioner chooses to do so.

3

Practitioner and atelier recognition

Recognition arrangements should distinguish between a practitioner's demonstrated capability; a credential level held; the conditions and capabilities of an atelier or workshop; the assessment of craftsmanship in a particular work; the certification of a product; the ownership of a business; and entitlement to use a geographical indication. These are separate determinations.

A person is a craft practitioner by reason of practice. Certified Craft Practitioner (CCP) and Certified Craft Atelier (CCA) are proposed ACA and CWA credentials, and holding a credential should remain distinct from recognition as a practitioner.

Practitioner and atelier records should be verified, correctable, and held with the consent of the person or enterprise they describe.

A Craftsmanship Star Rating should relate to a defined product, batch or consistently specified product line. For repaired or conserved work, supporting information should identify the existing object, the intervention and the contribution covered. Practitioner credentials, atelier recognition and Master recognition should be recorded independently of the product rating, which confers no personal title.

4

Provenance

Provenance records should document materials and ingredients, maker or producer, place, method, transmission lineage, subsequent ownership, custody and use, and associated oral histories and cultural meanings. Records should state evidence gaps and the degree of uncertainty attaching to each element, and should distinguish documented fact from attribution and from claim.

Provenance is a record. It is distinct from certification, and distinct from the attribution instruments — including the Unique Provenance Identifier and Maker's Mark — that link a record to a person or a work.

A Maker's Mark should attribute a verified practitioner's contribution. The practitioner's Unique Provenance Identifier should connect that person to the practitioner record, while a separate product identifier should connect the work to its linked provenance and assessment records. Verification should address the evidence supporting each recorded claim. An identifier alone does not verify the contents of the record. Records should distinguish verified facts, estimates, attributed accounts, disputed claims and missing information.

Provenance Rights are proposed as an evidentiary framework addressing the commercial use of a maker's documented record. Their legal form would require further design, consultation and legislative consideration.

5

Certification

Certificationschemes operating in the sector should publish their criteria, assessment method, assessor competencies, decision authority, review and appeal procedures, fees, validity periods and conditions of mark use. The certified attributes and assessed scope should be clear to buyers, retailers and regulators.

The Craftsmanship Star Rating Framework describes one overall product rating out of five across five public pillars: Provenance; Materials and impact; Durability; Repair and circularity; and Heritage and transmission. The pillars explain the subjects considered within the overall product account. They are not individual badges, and completing a pillar does not earn one star.

Technical craftsmanship concerns the quality of skilled human judgement and execution at consequential stages of making, modifying, repairing or conserving work. It encompasses command of materials or ingredients, tools and processes, execution and fitness for purpose, and qualities recognised within the practice. These considerations run through the relevant pillars. Manual, digital and machine-assisted production can all involve craftsmanship; production scale, origin and material type should be understood in relation to the product's function, making and impact.

Product information and comparisons should be appropriate to the materials, intended function and conditions of use. For durable goods, relevant questions include lasting performance, maintenance, repair and recovery. For craft foods and beverages, they concern quality during the intended storage and consumption period, prevention of avoidable losses and appropriate circularity pathways. Information about packaging should remain distinct from information about its contents.

Provenance records the knowledge lineage associated with the work, while Heritage and transmission explains the continuing practice and learning relationships sustaining it. Durability concerns retention of performance; repair concerns interventions that restore or extend use. Supporting information should distinguish verified facts, estimates, attributed accounts, disputed claims and missing information. An evidence gap should remain distinct from a demonstrated weakness.

Assessors should have relevant field competence, declare conflicts and exercise judgement independently of the applicant. Assessment decisions should be reviewed before authorisation, with an opportunity to correct factual errors and a separate review or appeal pathway. Certification decisions should remain separate from commercial licensing decisions. Payment should fund assessment or authorised use of the mark and should not purchase a score.

Supporting product information should identify the work and contribution covered, material and production sources, relevant findings and evidence limitations. Stable product identifiers should connect the work to its supporting records. Physical and digital communication should give buyers clear, accessible information before purchase. Product assessment, practitioner recognition, origin, geographical-indication entitlement, labour compliance and cultural authority should retain their respective evidence and decision requirements.

Detailed assessment methods and conditions for using the CSR mark will be developed and tested before publication in a separate Implementation Guide. Discipline-specific schedules and assessment tools should be developed through that process, with evidence routes proportionate to the product and accessible to sole practitioners and smaller enterprises.

6

First Nations authority

Wherecraftpractice,knowledge, design, materials or Country of First Nations peoples is involved, authority rests with the relevant knowledge holders and their communities. Engagement should proceed on the basis of free, prior and informed consent. Arrangements should provide for restricted access where access is culturally restricted, for correction of records, for withdrawal where withdrawal is culturally required, and for community control of data held about that knowledge.

Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) should be addressed as a distinct framework, held separately from ordinary intellectual property ownership.

Assessment involving First Nations cultural knowledge should proceed through respectful agreement with the relevant knowledge holders and communities. Permissions, attribution, access and correction arrangements should be recorded. Culturally restricted knowledge need not be publicly disclosed to demonstrate that authorised evidence has been examined. Heritage assessment should concern the arrangements sustaining practice and transmission, without ranking the comparative worth of cultures.

7

Producer governance

Whereproducers act collectively, including in relation to a geographical indication or a craft and industrial geographical indication (CIGI), governance arrangements should address membership and eligibility; access for eligible producers; decision-making and representation; the defined geographical area; the product specification; compliance and verification; and dispute resolution.

Governance should be representative of the producers to whom the specification applies. National coordination arrangements are matters for the proposed Australian Craft and Provenance Bill and associated policy consideration.

8

Fair economic practice

Practitioners should bepaidfor making, for teaching, for assessment, for repair and conservation, and for authorised commercial use of their work, their name and their documented provenance. Terms should be agreed in writing, with scope, duration and remuneration stated.

The proposed remuneration mechanisms require evidence, consultation and legal design to determine their scope and any enforceable entitlements.

Fair payment, economic benefit sharing and cultural royalties should be documented and assessed through their applicable agreements and evidence. The Craftsmanship Star Rating does not certify these outcomes. Assessment and licence fees should be published, with proportionate access arrangements considered for sole practitioners and micro-enterprises.

9

Statistical visibility

National workforce, economic, trade and cultural datasets should make the sector visible across the systems in which it operates, including arts, industry, heritage, construction, food, education and vocational training.

Classification work should allow craft practice, production, repair, conservation and teaching to be identified and counted, and should allow the sector to be observed across portfolios.

10

Education and training

School,vocational education and training, higher education, workplace and community pathways should connect, so that a learner can progress from early practical experience to sustained work.

Practical hand-skill education should begin early and continue through schooling, supported by specialist facilities, equipment and materials. Practitioners should be able to teach within these settings, with recognition of prior learning available to practitioners entering formal teaching or assessment roles.

Pathways should be designed to lead into sustained employment, enterprise or continued practice.

11

Regional infrastructure

Places where transmission, production, assessment and provenance work occur should be recognised according to the functions they perform. These settings include workshops and studios, guilds and collectives, working farms and mills, craft and manufacturing enterprises, museums and heritage bodies, and education institutions.

Recognition arrangements should accommodate existing settings across a range of organisational forms, and should support the regional distribution of capability.

12

Digital interoperability

Provenancerecords shoulduse stable identifiers and exportable, machine-readable data capable of supporting product, customs, buyer and Digital Product Passport requirements. Digital assessment records should preserve the source, date, scope and verification status of supporting evidence, together with the applicable assessment version and current rating status. Stable product identifiers should support public verification while personal, commercially sensitive and culturally restricted evidence remains subject to appropriate access controls.

Digital Product Passport compatibility should be developed through exportable records and demonstrated interoperability with the applicable adopted requirements. A QR code or a fixed set of information fields should not, by itself, be represented as establishing compliance. Requirements should be determined for the relevant product category and market.

Records should protect personal information, commercially sensitive information and culturally restricted information, with access controls set by the record holder and, where relevant, by the relevant knowledge holders.

Platform terms should preserve existing rights in supplied material and culturally governed knowledge and specify permissions for storage, access, correction, reuse and transfer. Rights and permissions should remain attached to the relevant practitioner, rights holder or community as records move between systems.

The Proposed Australian Craft and Provenance Bill

The proposed Australian Craft and Provenance Bill would give statutory form to functions requiring public authority. These Standards themselves remain an industry framework.

The proposed legislative architecture has two Parts, following the order of the four terms set out above. Its final form, and the identity of any administering body, are matters for the Australian Government and the legislative process.

Part A — Sector recognition, practitioners, ateliers and transmission

Part A would address recognition of the sector; the definition and recognition of craft practitioners and ateliers; transmission settings and the conditions applying to them; assessment arrangements; and review and appeal. Part A would establish the framework within which recognition and assessment operate. The treatment of any existing industry credential within that framework is a matter for Government.

Part B — Provenance, certification and craft and industrial geographical indications

Part B would address provenance infrastructure, including identifiers, records and record-keeping obligations; certification and the scope of certification marks; and craft and industrial geographical indications, including specification, defined area, compliance and enforcement.

Existing and proposed industry architecture — including the Unique Provenance Identifier, Maker's Mark, Southern Cross Mark, Southern Cross Registry, Craftsmanship Star Rating Framework and Geographical Indications Directory for Crafts, Industrial Products, and Cultural Works — may inform that design. Each instrument should retain its defined function and evidence requirements. Statutory form is determined by Government.

Relationship with existing Australian law

The proposed Bill would complement the Trade Marks Act 1995 (Cth), the Wine Australia Act 2013 (Cth), the Australian Consumer Law, other intellectual property legislation, workplace law, privacy law, and emerging protection for Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property. It would operate alongside Australia's international obligations, including the geographical indications arrangements arising from the Australia–European Union Free Trade Agreement.

Alignment with Future Made in Australia

The Australian Government's Future Made in Australia National Interest Framework (Treasury, 2024) identifies two streams under which public investment may be assessed: the Net Zero Transformation Stream and the Economic Resilience and Security Stream.

These Standards support assessment of textile and craft manufacturing under the Economic Resilience and Security Stream, on the basis of supply concentration, the distribution of processing capability, and the availability of documented information about domestic capability and supply chains. Provenance infrastructure contributes to that assessment by identifying where capability and supply exist and how they are constituted.

International and Domestic Framework and Alignment

The instruments below are recorded as comparative reference points. Each is described according to its own legal and administrative form.

Instrument	Year	Form and relevance
Japan — Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties (Act No. 214)	1950	Recognition of craft techniques as cultural property, with recognition of individual and collective holders of those techniques and state support for their transmission. Administered as cultural policy.
Germany — Handwerksordnung (Trade and Crafts Code)	1953	Statutory definition of the skilled trades, regional Chambers of Crafts maintaining a public register of craft businesses, and the Meister qualification as a structured progression from apprenticeship through journeyman to master, carrying the entitlement to train apprentices.
Japan — Act on the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries	1974	Designation of traditional craft products and producing regions, administered by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry as industry policy directed to regional economic development.
Italy — Law No. 443 of 1985, framework law for artisan enterprise	1985	Statutory definition of the artisan enterprise and a register of artisan enterprises. Registration conditions access to support measures and the use of artisan designations in business names.
United Kingdom — Harris Tweed Act 1993	1993	Statutory product, place and production system. The Act defines the cloth by reference to specified materials, to dyeing and spinning in the Outer Hebrides, to handweaving in weavers' homes, and to finishing in the islands, administered by a statutory authority applying a certification mark.
Australia — Trade Marks Act 1995 (Cth), certification trade marks	1995	Certification trade marks registered with IP Australia, with certification rules assessed by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, provide a current mechanism for certifying defined characteristics of goods and services.
UNESCO — Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage	2003	International safeguarding framework including the domain of traditional craftsmanship. Australia is not a State Party. Recorded here as a comparative framework.
Austria — Regional Centres for Craftsmanship	2016	Inscribed on the UNESCO Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. Three regional centres combining training, apprenticeship, exhibition and commercial production, governed by associations working with craft businesses and educational institutions.
European Union — Regulation (EU) 2023/2411	2023, applicable 1 Dec 2025	Establishes a Union system of geographical indication protection for craft and industrial products, administered through the European Union Intellectual Property Office. Article 70 provides for transition of national craft and industrial GI protections within Member States by 2 December 2026.
Australia — Australia–European Union Free Trade Agreement	2026	Negotiations concluded 24 March 2026. Australia has agreed to establish a geographical indications regime protecting specified European Union geographical indications and providing a pathway for qualifying Australian agricultural goods and spirits. Signature, domestic processes and entry into force remain in train.

Principal Sources

The following sources support the legal, institutional and comparative statements in this document. A full bibliography is published with the sector research report.

Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, UNESCO, Paris, 17 October 2003.

Regional Centres for Craftsmanship: a strategy for safeguarding the cultural heritage of traditional handicraft (Austria), inscribed 2016, UNESCO Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, Decision 11.COM 10.c.2.

Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties (Act No. 214 of 1950), Japan, as amended.

Act on the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries (1974), Japan, administered by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

Gesetz zur Ordnung des Handwerks (Handwerksordnung), Germany, 1953, as amended.

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European Union (2024b) Regulation (EU) 2024/1781 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 establishing a framework for the setting of ecodesign requirements for sustainable products. Official Journal of the European Union, L 2024/1781, 28 June.

Purpose and Endorsement

These Minimum Standards establish a shared baseline for organisations and practitioners whose work intersects with craft, craftsmanship, transmission, provenance and craft and industrial production in Australia. This includes governments and public institutions; arts organisations and industry peak bodies; manufacturing, textile and material production organisations; retailers, wholesalers, specifiers and commissioning organisations; museums, archives, libraries and heritage bodies; guilds, collectives and maker communities; working farms and food and fibre producers; education and training bodies; First Nations cultural organisations; disability arts and access organisations; regional and place-based civic institutions; philanthropic and funding bodies; universities and research institutions; and individual practitioners.

They are intended to inform consultation on the proposed Australian Craft and Provenance Bill and on the recognition of the Australian Craft and Provenance Sector within Australian policy and statistical systems.

Endorsement is voluntary and open to any organisation or body whose work intersects with the sector. Endorsing organisations signal support for the conditions set out here. Endorsement confers no statutory status, registration, funding or authority over another practitioner or community.

Endorsement supports the overarching principles and the development of assessment arrangements under them. Adoption of discipline-specific schedules, numerical scoring rules and conditions for live rating issuance requires a separately documented decision following consultation and piloting.

Endorsement of these Standards is endorsement of the principles they set out. It does not constitute endorsement of any single organisation as the sector's future statutory administrator, a matter to be determined by Government and the legislative process.

Australian Crafts Alliance
Secretariat: Creative Women's Association Australia Pty Ltd

AUSTRALIAN CRAFTS ALLIANCE

CRAFTSMANSHIP STAR RATING

Framework



2026

australiancraftsalliance.com

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Purpose of this Framework

This Framework explains the purpose, principles and product scope of the Craftsmanship Star Rating (CSR) system. It is intended for those who specify, source, produce, commission, distribute, sell, repair or purchase tangible products, and for organisations that educate and inform consumers.

It outlines the overarching principles of the CSR system, its five public pillars, and the role of the CSR graphic and supporting information on products, packaging and associated listings. It explains the system's approach to consumer awareness, product quality and preventative craftsmanship. *Detailed assessment methods and conditions for using the CSR mark will be developed and tested in a separate Implementation Guide.*

Section 1 Overview

The fundamental purpose of the CSR system is:

'To provide reliable, relevant and readily understood craftsmanship information and/or guidance on products to assist consumers to make informed purchases and more sustainable choices.'

The CSR is designed as a product labelling system for goods offered through shops, galleries, markets, direct commissions and online retail. It is intended to make craftsmanship and product quality visible at the point of purchase, with supporting information available for buyers who want to understand the result.

The framework brings together five public pillars: Provenance; Materials and impact; Durability; Repair and circularity; and Heritage and transmission. The overall star display provides the concise consumer signal, while the pillars explain the subjects through which craftsmanship and product quality are considered (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026, Recommendation Six).

The system also supports preventative craftsmanship: applying material knowledge and skilled judgement during design and production to reduce avoidable harms, premature failure and waste. Its questions concern what is made, how it is made and the conditions supporting continued use and the transmission of knowledge.

Participation is voluntary. The product is the focus of the rating, while practitioner capability, workshop recognition and production origin retain their own meanings within the wider sector framework. Useful comparison concerns products serving similar functions under comparable conditions of use.

1.1 The consumer presentation

The CSR graphic presents the overall rating as stars and a number out of five (Figure 1). The five-pillar panel names the areas behind that display; its symbols identify those areas separately from the overall result.

The emblem identifies the system. Supporting product information explains the materials, making, use and care behind the display. Figures 2–5 show the emblem, pillar panel and their application.



Figure 1. Craftsmanship Star Ratings

Images: Australian Crafts Alliance.



Figure 2. Emblem



Figure 3. Five pillars



Figure 4. Green tote



Figure 5. White tote

Images: Australian Crafts Alliance.

Section 2 Application of the CSR system

The CSR is designed to make craftsmanship and quality information available where a product is selected: on the product, its packaging or swing tag, at the point of sale and in the corresponding online listing. Its scope includes packaged, unpackaged and commissioned work.

2.1 Product fields

The framework concerns tangible products in which learned material knowledge and skilled human judgement contribute to consequential stages of making, modification, repair or conservation. The following fields identify the kinds of product differences relevant to consumer understanding.

Product field	Relevant product characteristics
Textiles, clothing and leather	Composition, dyes and finishes, construction, wear, care, alteration, repair and recovery.
Timber and furniture	Sourcing, joints and fixings, surfaces, stability, wear, replacement components and restoration.
Ceramics and glass	Material preparation, forming, firing or treatment, finishing and performance in the intended use.
Metal, jewellery and instruments	Material identity, forming and assembly, precision, functional performance, maintenance and repair.
Paper and other material products	Material preparation, fabrication, intended function, care and practical recovery pathways.
Craft foods and beverages	Ingredients, producer judgement, making and maturation, quality during the intended storage period, packaging and food-waste prevention.

2.2 Individual commissioned and renewed products

One-off objects, made-to-order products and repaired or conserved work need descriptions that identify the particular object or intervention. Cloth, a garment made from that cloth and a kit for making the garment are different products. For existing objects, the description should distinguish the original work from the contribution made through repair or conservation.

2.3 Production method and place

Manual, digital and machine-assisted production can all involve craftsmanship. The relevant question is where skilled judgement affects the process or outcome and what quality results. Clear material sources and production locations allow buyers to understand local, imported and mixed production alongside the work itself (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026, p. 19).

2.4 Users across industries

Relevant users span Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing; Manufacturing; Construction; Wholesale Trade; Retail Trade; Arts and Recreation Services; and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, among other industries identified by the ABS (2026). Museums, cultural institutions, venues and service businesses may engage with the CSR through commissioning, procuring, displaying or selling tangible products. Its audience follows those activities across industries.

Section 3 Craftsmanship and the five pillars

Craftsmanship is the demonstrable quality of making that arises when learned and embodied knowledge is applied through skilled human judgement at one or more consequential stages of making, modifying, repairing or conserving a product, including through the transformation, assembly or treatment of materials, ingredients or existing objects, such that the practitioner's judgement materially affects the process or outcome (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026, p. 19). Craftsmanship is evaluative. It concerns the quality of judgement and execution within the practice. In this Framework, technical craftsmanship describes command of materials, tools and processes, consequential decisions during making, and execution appropriate to the intended function. These qualities run through the five pillars. Material selection is relevant to Materials and impact; construction and finishing to Durability; and access for maintenance and renewal to Repair and circularity.

The pillars organise related aspects of the product for consumer understanding. They are not five separate stars or five independent claims of certification. Each heading explains a distinct subject within the overall product account.

3.1 Provenance

Provenance concerns the documented connections between a product, its materials or ingredients, contributors, production stages, method and place. It also includes the lineage through which making knowledge was acquired and transmitted, and the object's subsequent history. Product information can identify who contributed, what was transformed and where consequential stages occurred, while retaining any uncertainty or disputed attribution (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026, A Note on Terms).

Within this pillar, knowledge lineage explains how the capability used in making reached the practitioner or workshop. A product history can continue as ownership, custody, repair and use become part of the record.

3.2 Materials and impact

Materials and impact concerns composition and the consequences of material selection, processing and finishing throughout production, use and end of life. Relevant information includes resource use, treatments, substances introduced, potential releases and practical recovery routes. Its meaning depends on the product's function and the stages covered by the information.

Natural, synthetic, local and recycled describe characteristics to examine alongside performance and impact. A material's significance cannot be settled by its name alone. Blends, coatings, processing and conditions of use remain part of the product enquiry (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026, section 17.4).

3.3 Durability

Durability concerns how well a product retains its intended function and appropriate quality under the use and care for which it is made. For a garment, this includes the performance of its fabric, seams and fastenings. For furniture, it includes structural stability and the performance of joints and surfaces. Product purpose determines what lasting performance means; a dining chair and a decorative object present different questions.

For foods and beverages, the corresponding concern is retaining appropriate quality during the intended storage and consumption period, including the effect of maturation or preservation. A longer storage life is not, by itself, evidence of better craftsmanship.

3.4 Repair and circularity

Repair and circularity concerns the practical means of maintaining value after production. For durable goods, these include repair, alteration, restoration, replacement components, disassembly, reuse and material recovery. Durability describes retention of performance; repair describes the intervention that restores or extends it. Care can support both, with each relationship explained in the product information.

Consumable goods require a different application of circularity. For craft foods and beverages, relevant questions concern preventing avoidable losses, using suitable edible by-products and managing packaging and residual materials. Repair and replacement-part questions concern any durable containers or equipment within the stated scope, rather than the food itself. Information about packaging should remain distinct from information about its contents.

3.5 Heritage and transmission

Heritage and transmission concerns the living knowledge connected with the work and the relationships through which capability continues to be learned, renewed and passed on. Apprenticeship, mentoring, supervised learning and community practice can sustain that capability. Contemporary innovation and the renewal of established techniques are both relevant to living practice.

Provenance records the lineage associated with the work; Heritage and transmission explains the continuing practice and learning relationships sustaining it. The same learning history may inform both accounts, but it answers a different question in each. This distinction preserves the report’s broad definition of provenance without treating the headings as interchangeable.

First Nations cultural knowledge, authority and heritage remain directed by the relevant knowledge holders and communities, including decisions about attribution, permissions and disclosure. The framework concerns the continuity of practice and knowledge; cultural worth is determined by the communities concerned (UNESCO, 2015).

Section 4 Product information and meaningful comparison

Useful craftsmanship information connects each statement with an identifiable product and an appropriate context. The product's purpose, composition and production history establish what the buyer is being asked to understand. The following principles explain that relationship without prescribing an assessment procedure.

4.1 Identify the product and contribution

Product information should identify the individual object, batch or product line concerned and describe the materials, contributors and production stages covered. A description of one material or process has a narrower scope than a description of the complete product. Information about a repair should identify the intervention and the existing object's relevant condition.

A product result concerns the defined work. Information about a practitioner's capability or a workshop's history can explain its making, while a product-specific account identifies the actual contribution, materials and construction involved.

4.2 Compare equivalent functions

Comparison is most useful between products serving similar purposes, such as coats with coats or dining chairs with dining chairs. Relevant conditions include intended use, environment, care and maintenance. A protective garment and an everyday shirt require different performance considerations, even where both use the same fibre.

The product fields in Section 2 organise these enquiries. Each field needs terms appropriate to its materials and use. A textile's resistance to wear, a musical instrument's functional performance and a food's quality during storage describe different characteristics. Their interpretation belongs within the relevant practice.

4.3 Explain material and production choices

Composition, manual contribution, price and production scale provide context. Their significance becomes clearer when connected to specific decisions and outcomes. For example, a description of a furniture joint can explain its construction and accessibility for repair; a fibre description can be accompanied by information about finishes, care and recovery.

Provenance can establish the source of a material or method. Performance information addresses how the resulting product behaves. A statement supporting one of these questions should retain its actual scope when used elsewhere in the product account.

4.4 Keep evidence gaps visible

Product information should distinguish supported findings, estimates, attributed accounts, disputed claims and unavailable information. An unknown material source is different from a documented source with an identified impact. Likewise, an untested seam is different from a seam that has failed a relevant test.

The five pillars provide a structure for explaining these findings. A well-documented origin does not itself establish durability, and a record of teaching does not establish environmental performance. Keeping the subjects distinct preserves the specific meaning and limits of each claim.

Section 5 Preventative craftsmanship

Preventative craftsmanship brings the CSR's questions into design and production planning. It asks how material knowledge and skilled judgement can reduce avoidable damage, premature failure and waste before the product is made. This extends the report's Preventative Textiles approach across tangible products, while retaining the requirements of each material and use (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026, section 17.4).

5.1 Begin with function and material choice

Start with the function the product must perform and the conditions in which it will be used. Consider which material can provide that function, how much processing it requires and which additional substances or components are introduced. Relevant questions include resource demand, dyes and finishes, exposure during making and use, maintenance, and the practical options available at the end of the product's useful life.

Production choices also raise questions about sourcing, working conditions and responsibility for stages of making. An ethical-production claim needs information about the conditions examined and the stages of the supply chain it covers. It should remain identifiable alongside the product's material and performance information.

Biodegradability concerns the finished material under specified conditions, including its blends, coatings and treatments. The report's textile analysis considers natural and synthetic fibres in relation to processing, required function, potential releases and end-of-life pathways. This directs attention to the complete material choice and its consequences (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026, section 17.4).

5.2 Design for continued use

Construction choices influence whether a product can be maintained and renewed. For a garment, this may involve fabric performance, seams, linings, fastenings and access for alteration. For furniture, it may involve joints, surfaces and components that can be repaired or refinished. Clear care information and accessible repair knowledge help carry the value of skilled making into the period of use.

Australia's Circular Economy Framework connects product design with durability, repair, reuse and retention of material value. In the CSR, these considerations inform questions about the product before purchase and about the decisions that shaped it (DCCEEW, 2024).

5.3 Connect improvement with regional capability

A linked research and design program would test how accumulated material knowledge can improve contemporary production, reduce avoidable material harms and retain more value and capability in Australian regions. For textiles, that enquiry could follow fibre selection through spinning, weaving or knitting, dyeing, finishing, construction, use and recovery.

Practitioners, manufacturers and researchers can examine specific production choices together, including safer finishing, repairable construction and viable local processing. The CSR gives those choices a place in consumer understanding alongside the report's wider productive-capability framework (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026, Recommendation Fourteen).

Section 6 Consumer information and craft washing

Terms such as handmade, artisan and crafted can appear across markedly different scales and forms of production. Phillipov, Luckman and McGaurr (2025) examine how artisanal language and imagery are also used to promote industrial production. A product-specific account of actual making helps buyers understand the quality behind its presentation.

6.1 Give craft claims specific content

Craft washing describes a gap between marketing that invokes craft and what the product information substantiates. The CSR is designed to address that gap by connecting a recognisable consumer display with information about contributors, materials, making and the qualities relevant to use. Its five pillars give those subjects a consistent place in the purchasing decision.

Attribution is part of that information. Identifying the practitioner or workshop, material sources and consequential stages of making helps buyers recognise the contribution behind the finished work. Dated production photographs, material descriptions and care or repair information can also preserve a useful account of how that work was developed and made.

6.2 Make information useful before purchase

The consumer presentation connects the overall stars and number, an explanation of the five pillars and access to product-specific information. A concise display provides immediate recognition; the accompanying account explains the qualities and product scope it represents. The same product identity should remain clear on a tag, retail display and online listing.

Digital presentation should include readable text for the rating and pillar names, alongside a direct route to the relevant product information. For unpackaged and commissioned work, a catalogue entry, product description or accompanying document can provide that explanation. Buyers should be able to find it while making their choice.

6.3 French product information in practice

France launched voluntary environmental-cost display for clothing on 1 October 2025. The method considers impacts from production to end of life, including fossil resources, water use, microfibre emissions and durability. It expresses environmental cost as impact points, with higher points indicating greater impact. The example connects visible consumer information with attention to material and production choices upstream (Ministère de l’Économie, 2025).

France’s durability index offers a complementary example. Introduced for televisions on 8 January 2025 and washing machines on 8 April 2025, it combines reliability and repairability in a score out of ten displayed near the price in shops and online. For the CSR, these examples support the importance of product-specific information at the point of choice. Their assessment methods remain specific to the qualities and products they cover (Ministère de la Transition écologique, 2025).

Section 7 Relationship with other labels and recognition

A product can carry information about craftsmanship, origin, material properties and the people responsible for its making. These forms of information answer different consumer questions. Presenting their meanings clearly allows the CSR to sit within the report's wider recognition and provenance framework (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026, sections 10.5 and 13.4).

Type of information	Question it addresses
Craftsmanship Star Rating	What craftsmanship and product qualities are considered across the five CSR pillars?
Maker's Mark	Which verified practitioner contribution is attributed to the work?
Practitioner or atelier recognition	What capability or productive setting has been recognised?
Country-of-origin information	Where was the product made, grown or produced under the stated origin claim?
Geographical indication	Which qualifying place-linked name and product specification apply?
Specialist material process or labour certification	Which defined material, processing, performance or working-condition requirements have been verified?

7.1 Consumer recognition and supporting records

The Australian Made, Australian Grown logo illustrates how a recognisable mark can help consumers identify Australian origin. The CSR is designed to bring comparable practical visibility to craftsmanship and product quality, with its own five-pillar meaning (Australian Made Campaign Ltd, n.d.).

The practitioner's Unique Provenance Identifier connects the person to their practitioner record. A separate product identifier can connect the work with its product history and supporting information. This allows a concise consumer display to sit alongside a fuller account of materials, contributors, production, repair and custody (Australian Crafts Alliance, 2026, sections 13.4–13.7).

7.2 Skilled production and living knowledge

France's Entreprise du Patrimoine Vivant label recognises enterprises with exceptional craft and industrial know-how. It provides a complementary example of skilled production made visible through enterprise recognition. Information about a particular product addresses the contribution and qualities of that work (Direction générale des Entreprises, 2025).

Within the CSR, Heritage and transmission concerns the living knowledge connected with making and the relationships sustaining it. Supporting information can explain that continuity while respecting the authority, permissions and disclosure decisions of the practitioners and communities concerned (UNESCO, 2015).

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Craft ateliers, Creative spaces | Image: Australian Crafts Alliance