

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

For the Craft ACT Board of Management, 2019 was a time of transition, growth and planning.

Graham Humphries, the dedicated and effective President of Craft ACT for six years, completed his final term on the board. To ensure a smooth transition, Graham announced his departure at the 2019 AGM which allowed us time throughout the year to learn from his experience and tap into the expertise of recent board appointments. Graham leaves Craft ACT in excellent shape and playing a leadership role in our region's arts ecology, our sector's growth and now with a growing international reach. I would like to thank Graham for his outstanding contribution to Craft ACT. His legacy will be enjoyed for years to come as we continue to seek recognition of Canberra as a UNESCO City of Design and plan for our move to the Kingston Arts Precinct.

Graham stepped down as president after the December 2019 meeting and the board elected me as interim president. I would like to thank my fellow continuing board members who have contributed significantly to Craft ACT over the past year: Sari Sutton (Secretary and Public Officer), Rob Henry, and member representatives Gilbert Riedelbauch and Julie Ryder. Thank you to Jennie Cameron for accepting the position of interim board member late in 2019. I would like to especially note the dedicated contribution of Treasurer Sam Bryant, a certified practicing accountant who regularly supports the organisation with risk management, workplace health and safety, and financial approvals and reporting. I thank retiring board members Stephen Cassidy (2014) for his experienced and enthusiastic contribution to Craft ACT and DESIGN Canberra over many years, and Andrea Ho (2017) who has provided valued leadership in HR, diversity and communications.

My thanks also to the Craft ACT staff: Anna Fryer, Meagan Jones, Selina Kang, Harriet McKay, Kate Nixon, Matilda Skerritt and Madisyn Zabel whose talent and commitment has contributed to the outstanding success of the many programs, exhibitions and functions now enjoyed by Craft ACT audiences. The board acknowledges the enthusiasm and expertise of our CEO, Dr Rachael Coghlan, who has provided leadership to the team and whose dedication to the success of the organisation has been demonstrated through a growth in membership, a strong exhibition program and the delivery of another outstanding, profile raising DESIGN Canberra festival.

Craft ACT Members are of course the backbone of the organisation. The growing membership numbers attest to the success of the many programs and benefits offered by Craft ACT and confirm our relevance to the community we serve. Membership was not the only area that grew in 2019: attendances, visibility, sponsorship, digital engagement, recognition and artist income enjoyed significant and welcome increases.

The board, staff, membership and community invested considerable resources in Craft ACT's application to the Australia Council for four-year funding (2021–24). In addition to a comprehensive two-stage application process, Craft ACT developed a new strategic plan to support our application. Bringing together perspectives and ideas from members, stakeholders and thought leaders has resulted in an inspiring road map for the future of Craft ACT. This round of funding will be even more competitive than the previous round and our expectations should be modest when we observe that many of our respected peers in the Australian Craft and Design Centre network were

unsuccessful after the first round of applications. The increasingly restricted funding landscape for arts organisations; however regardless of the outcome of the grant application (although our fingers and toes are crossed), this careful planning process and document puts Craft ACT in a very strong position to continue to grow and thrive into the future.

I thank the ACT Government, the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy (an initiative of the Australian, state and territory governments), and the Australia Council for the Arts (the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body) for their ongoing support of Craft ACT. The organisation has also been privileged to receive significant financial support from its growing number of sponsors, without which many of our programs, particularly in the DESIGN Canberra festival, would not be possible. It is heartening to see the corporate community supporting and promoting good design in all its manifestations.

Rebecca Coronel

President (interim)

Craft ACT Board of Management (since February 2020)



**Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre**

PO Box 992  
Canberra ACT 2608

02 6262 9333

[craftact@craftact.org.au](mailto:craftact@craftact.org.au)  
[craftact.org.au](http://craftact.org.au)