

2021-24 STRATEGIC PLAN

# CRAFT ACT

CRAFT + DESIGN CENTRE



YOU ARE A PART OF THE CRAFT ACT STORY



# The Craft ACT Story

For nearly 50 years, CraftACT has played a vital role in sustaining Australia's high-quality studio practice and supporting craftspeople, designers and audiences. You are a part of our story: whether you're a designer, a maker, a collector, a colleague, an educator, a customer or visitor. CraftACT has touched the lives and built careers of thousands of people since we were established in 1971.

The 2021-24 strategic plan for Craft ACT: Craft + Design Centre outlines how we will continue to support our community of contemporary jewellers, furniture-makers, ceramic and textiles artists, glass makers and designers.

It will be the first chapter of the story of our next 50 years.



A strong program of challenging but innovative work in recent years has ensured that one of Australia's longest continuous running visual arts membership organisations is in its strongest position ever – artistically, financially, professionally and collaboratively.

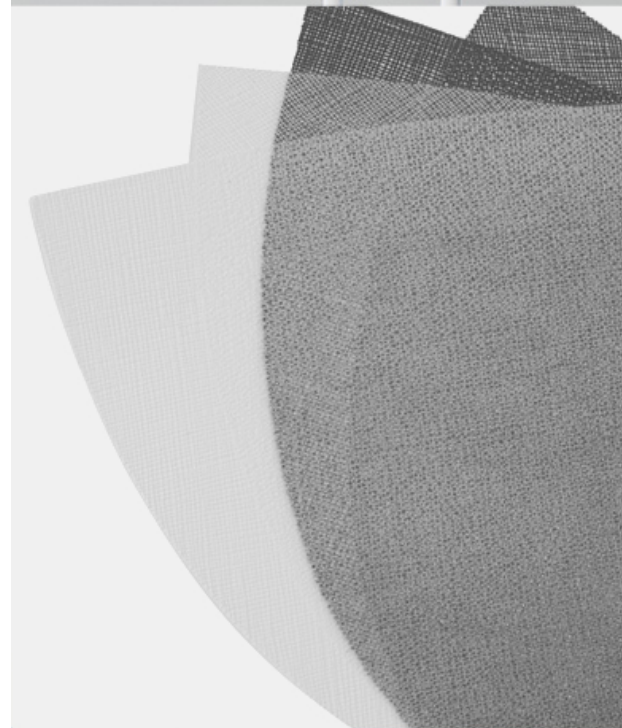
Craft ACT is an agile and dynamic organisation which supports entrepreneurship and enterprise development in the craft and design economy to address the ever-present economic fragility which underpins the sector. In 2019, we can report outstanding results from re-engaging our membership, supporting excellence in artistic practice, professionalising services and expanding our relevance and impact to national and international communities. Craft ACT's focus on applied arts produces links to both industry and popular interest. This results in economic relevance and a sense of being embedded with community, making Craft ACT a strong force in our cultural life. Both links underline the reality that arts, culture and creativity are integral to everyday life.

Craft is dynamic, enduring, entrepreneurial and respectful of tradition, uniting time-honoured techniques with contemporary interpretations built for the future. Craft ACT supports the contemporary craft practitioner, whose work occupies a unique position between tradition and innovation, thinking and doing, the local and global.

What craft is and what it means has evolved: although studies demonstrate most practitioners prefer to define themselves as artists or designer-makers, craft is central to the experience of our growing membership and critical to the future of a vibrant and innovative visual arts sector in Australia.

We look forward to transitioning Craft ACT towards its next 50 years, creating greater opportunities for this community of craftspeople and designers, and for the growing audience who admire and appreciate the beauty, skill and excellence of their work.

# Strategy framework



## OUR VISION

To embed contemporary craft, making and design at the centre of everyday life in Australia's capital, a global city of design

## OUR MISSION

To connect the Canberra region's high-quality studio practice to the world, by fostering innovation, building collaboration and championing a secure future for a valued, creative and essential community of contemporary craftspeople, designers and audiences.



## *Ensuring the practice of craftspeople and designers exists into the future*

As Craft ACT moves towards its 50th anniversary in 2021, we will work to secure the vitality and practice of the craftspeople, designers and audiences who form our vibrant community – locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. This will sustain Australia’s high-quality studio practice, grow the design craft sector and ensure the practice of craftspeople and designers exists into the future.

Craft ACT is one of the longest continuously running visual arts membership organisations in Australia, supporting artists, craft practitioners, designers and makers at every stage of their careers.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Over the past 4 years we have consolidated and strengthened our processes, and we will devote the 2021-24 period to building on these successes through four strategic priorities:

INNOVATION  
COLLABORATION  
VALUE  
SECURITY

Our annual DESIGN Canberra festival illustrated the potential for growth through creating greater exposure to craft and design on a national scale.

Through expanding our reach, moving toward new and more accessible gallery and shopfront premises, commissioning new work and increasing income for artists, Craft ACT seeks to expand the benefits of the festival for the global craft and design community year-round.



# Our achievements

*CraftACT has touched the lives and built careers of thousands of people since we were established in 1971.*

Our annual reports outline details of multiple achievements across our strategic priorities. Significant achievements over the last 3 years (2016-18) can be summarised as:

## RELEVANCE AND VALUE

Craft ACT membership increased 50% (compared to -2% 2013-15) due to strengthened policies, improved benefits and a commitment to encompassing First Nations artists and artists from culturally diverse backgrounds. We represent over 300 members at all stages of practice including acclaimed and peer-reviewed Accredited Professional Members with national and international recognition

## RESPECT FOR ARTISTIC PROGRAMS

Craft ACT's annual members' show improved in quality and representation: "an impressive roll call of artists who live and work in the Canberra region. If you want to know who the artists to watch are as well as what is happening in contemporary object-based practice, then this is the exhibition to visit" (The Canberra Times)

## VISIBILITY + ENGAGEMENT

DESIGN Canberra's attendance grew from 26,200 (2015) to 122,000 (2018) as a result of a new curated national program showcasing experimental contemporary craft and design to broader audiences

## INCREASED ARTIST INCOMES

Total artist income grew 70% from 2016 to 2018 due in large part to the success of DESIGN Canberra to generate income for artists (\$70,000 in 2016 compared to \$177,000 in 2018). Craft ACT supported significant acquisitions of member work for national and international collections

# Craft + design case-studies

OUR WORK. OUR COMMUNITY. OUR SHARED IMPACT.



Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander craft and design practice into Australian arts: Craft ACT's Indigenous residency and workshop was a great success with resulting work exhibited. Mentor: Jenni Kemarre Martiniello, acclaimed Australian Aboriginal (Arrente) glass artist



Building international collaboration: Craft ACT commissioned Kengo Kuma's installation NAMA KO in 2018 to foster experimentation, collaboration and education between Canberra and Tokyo



Supporting arts workers: Craft ACT increased staff salaries to align with NAVA rates, upgraded outdated IT infrastructure, invested in WHS and streamlined accounting processes and governance



Engaging global audiences: We engaged a PR firm to secure national and international media coverage of DESIGN Canberra 2018 achieving a record \$2m in media coverage (ASR) to reach 4.6m people via national newspapers, journals, blogs and magazines



Forging partnerships: Our relationships with government, universities, retail, business, diplomats, education and philanthropic bodies is growing due to our reputation as a trusted, collaborative and creative partner



Increased opportunities for artists: Craft ACT's acclaimed artist residency connects a national institution with Namadgi National Park, transforming the practice of multiple artists. Due to growing demand the program was expanded in 2017 to include a travelling exhibition and a Spring residency



Celebrating craft and design icons: Responding quickly but sensitively to an untimely death, Craft ACT engaged Grace Cochrane to curate an exhibition of work from F!NK and personal collections: Luminary, Remembering Robert Foster. The exhibition was set among Foster's spectacular installation of 'ossolites' and received critical acclaim



Delivering professional development: Craft ACT builds capacity, new skills and access to professional services with workshops and mentoring. Our 'Ready Set Market' program supports makers with product development and presentation, resulting in sales of \$8,000 at the debut market in 2018



Leading research and debate: Craft ACT presented the inaugural national design and craft writing conference 'Object Subject' to connect contemporary craft with discourse, building a bridge between academic and popular writing in Australia and the world





# Our environment

## DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Brings interconnection, a heightened relationship with audiences and flexible creative content

- Expanded audiences including future craft practitioners and designers in response to the rediscovery of handmade by the digital generation
- Improved services, archives and communications with existing and new practitioners and audiences, and enhanced collaboration between artists

## FIRST NATIONS CULTURES

At the heart of an evolving culture of globally connected contemporary Australia

- Continued and increased engagement with First Nations artists through membership, governance, professional development and artistic programs
- Engagement with First Nations curators and audiences

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY

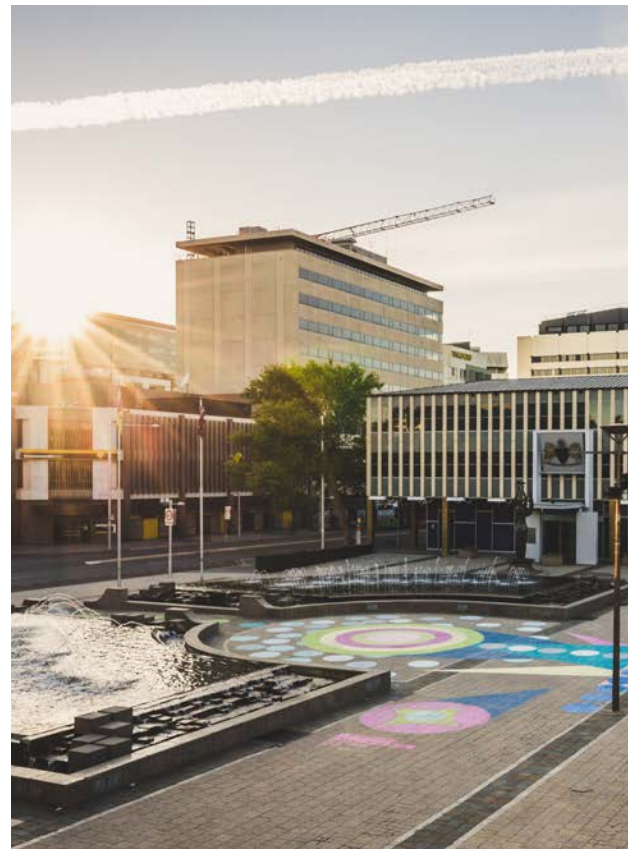
Fosters innovation where cultures intersect and fixed ideas are challenged and re-assessed

- Broaden footprint to encompass more artists from culturally diverse backgrounds
- Opportunities in membership, artistic programs and audience development

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Creative economy draws on and contributes to Australia's culture, projecting our stories to ourselves and the world

- Build on historic linkage between craft practice, industry and the economic viability for artists in the broader creative economy
- Connect craft practitioners and designers to new sources of income in the broader creative economy



## SOCIAL INCLUSION

Promise of arts and culture to address social challenges in Australian communities

- Promote economic relevance and a sense of being embedded with community: these are complementary aspects of contemporary craft
- Seek opportunities to take seriously our social responsibilities – social, environmental, ethical
- Create a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive cultural environment and experience

## ARTS EDUCATION

Decline in priority of arts education has serious implications for the future of high quality skills that the arts and culture sector depends on

- Strengthen existing long-term partnerships with outstanding tertiary and secondary education leaders (especially the ANU School of Art and Design and University of Canberra Faculty of Arts and Design) through artistic programs and outreach activities
- Stay connected with other training opportunities for craft practitioners outside of the tertiary sector including private workshops and TAFE

## FUNDING LANDSCAPE

Government funding for arts and culture is in flux and while community involvement with arts and culture is greater than ever, public support for Government funding of the arts has decreased

- Establish new models of support for arts and culture including community, philanthropic and corporate partnerships
- Deepen relationships with existing audiences, develop new audiences, and continue to forge new revenue opportunities

## GLOBALISATION + ASIAN CENTURY

Increasing globalisation, particularly in our immediate region, will have a major impact on Australia as the Asian Century progresses.

- Foster programming links internationally, particularly to Asia, to promote opportunities, exchanges and collaborations, building on existing international practices of our members
- Build on existing relationships with Australia's international diplomatic community located in Canberra



# Priorities + goals

Craft ACT's 2021-24 strategic priorities and goals have evolved from those in the 2016-20 strategic plan, and in response to the feedback and inspiration shared at community and stakeholder strategy workshops.

## INNOVATION

Foster innovation and excellence in artistic practice by building on our national and international reputation to support craft practitioners at every stage of practice

## COLLABORATION

Ensure more local, regional, national and global audiences have access to, and engage with, the Australian craft and design community

## VALUE

Educate the community about the potential of contemporary craft and design to inform public agendas, promote wellbeing and community cohesion, and forge viable commercial pathways

## SECURITY

Support professionalisation, entrepreneurship and enterprise development to build capacity, skills and security for artists and the sector



# Innovation

CRAFT ACT WILL FOSTER INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE IN ARTISTIC PRACTICE BY BUILDING ON OUR NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION TO SUPPORT CRAFT PRACTITIONERS AT EVERY STAGE OF PRACTICE

## STRATEGIES

- Host and present world class exhibitions of artistic excellence in contemporary craft and design, reflecting the cultural diversity inherent in Australian arts practice and in international collaborations and the innovation that is fostered by it.
- Engage exhibition and digital curators (with a particular focus on First Nations curators) to facilitate a quality global discourse on craft and design in our galleries, online and new touring programs
- Expand artistic programs to include international exchanges, residencies, collaborations and workshops, with appropriate practitioner fees paid



# Collaboration

## STRATEGIES

- Record the larger story of makers and their work in innovative and accessible ways, including digitised platforms and programs to acknowledge Craft ACT's 50 year history
- Build on the natural linkages of craft and design practice to actively contribute to urban planning, placemaking and design conversations, including nominating Canberra as a UNESCO City of Design
- Recognising the dynamic and central role of First Nations cultures within Australia's culture, actively engage with First Nations artists and communities to broaden Craft ACT's programs.
- Develop programs, partnerships and a culture that reflects the diversity of Australia and fosters social inclusion, so the sector addresses social, environmental and ethical responsibilities

CRAFT ACT WILL ENSURE MORE LOCAL, REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND GLOBAL AUDIENCES HAVE ACCESS TO, AND ENGAGE WITH, THE AUSTRALIAN CRAFT AND DESIGN COMMUNITY



# Value

CRAFT ACT WILL EDUCATE THE COMMUNITY ABOUT THE POTENTIAL OF CONTEMPORARY CRAFT AND DESIGN TO INFORM PUBLIC AGENDAS, PROMOTE WELLBEING AND COMMUNITY COHESION, AND FORGE VIABLE COMMERCIAL PATHWAYS

## STRATEGIES

- Create virtual platforms that build a sense of belonging, reflect history and educate audiences on the value of craft and design
- Transform the membership experience through stronger online infrastructure that supports membership services, artistic submissions, business development and retail transactions
- Secure larger, more visible and flexible premises (with professional environmental conditions in exhibition galleries) in an arts precinct in 2023 to accommodate travelling exhibitions, workshops and demonstrations and quality public programs
- Engage with First Nations artists and communities to ensure that the central and dynamic role of First Nations creativity and cultures within contemporary craft practice is widely understood and valued



**VISIONARIES**

**2019 Craft ACT Members Exhibition**

Abbey Jameson | Alison Jackson | Andrea Caycedo  
 Angela Bakker | Annie Trevillian | Avi Amesbury  
 Barbara Rogers | Belinda Toll | Benedict Laffan  
 Bev Hogg | Bic Teu | Cassandra Layne | Cathy Franz  
 Chelsea Lemon | Daniel Lorrimer  
 Daniel Margules | Daniel Venables | Debra Jurs  
 Dianna Firth | Elizabeth Paterson | Elliot Bastianon  
 Emilio Paterson | Sebastian Davies | Fran Romano  
 Gilbert Reedelbach | Hannah Gason  
 Harriet Schwarzrock | Isabelle Mackay Sim  
 Janet DeBoos | Jennifer Kemarre Martinello  
 Jennifer Robertson | Jeremy Brown | Jo Victoria  
 Jochen Heinemann | John White | Judi Elliott  
 Julie Bradley | Julie Pennington  
 Keiko Amenomori-Schmeisser | Leonie Andrews  
 Lia Tajonar | Lisa Cahill | Louis Grant | Lorna Ryan  
 Madiya Zabel | Marcia Holden | Margaret Brown  
 Mark Elliott | Melanie Oldz | Monique van Nieuwland  
 Morag McKenna | Naomi Zouwer | Pamela Irving  
 Phoebe Porter | René Lissen | Robyn Campbell  
 Rolf Barfoed | Rochyn de Bussey | Ruby Berry  
 Ruth Allen | Ruth Hingston | Sally Blake | Sarah Bourke  
 Sarah Cohen | Sharon Peoples | Sophi Suttor  
 Sue Hewat | Tania Wancic | Tom Skeehan | Valerie Kirk  
 Xenia Bricetto | Zoe Brand

# Security

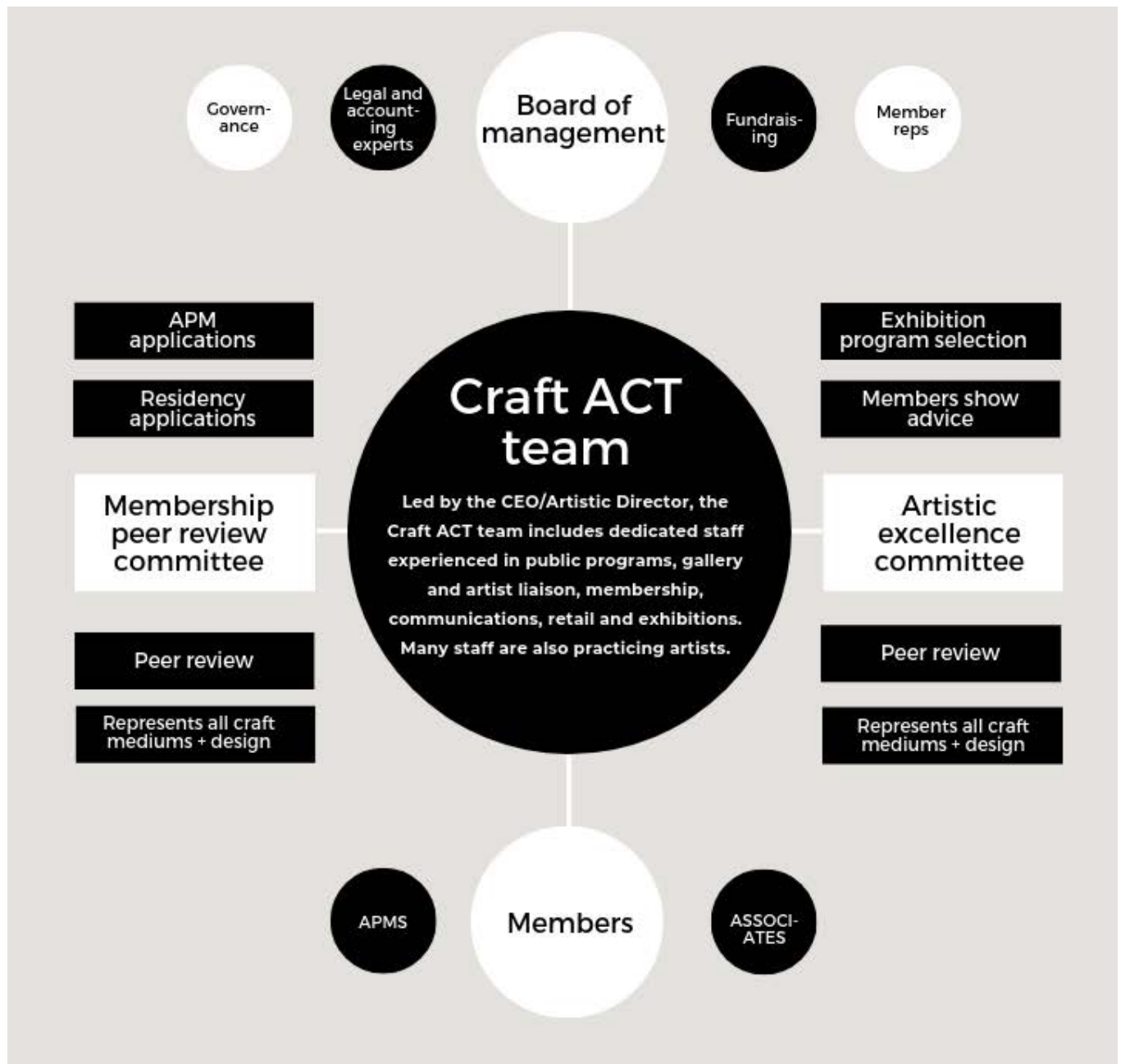
**STRATEGIES**

- Grow the DESIGN Canberra festival with inspiring legacy projects and pathways toward income generation, expanded commercial partnerships and marketplace connectivity
- Implement further stages of the Indigenous contemporary craft and design residency and workshops to include an Indigenous teacher and curator
- Introduce new professional development programs to support members and staff with business development tools and emerging technologies to facilitate enhanced collaboration (online and in-person) between members, disciplines, mediums and markets

CRAFT ACT WILL SUPPORT PROFESSIONALISATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT TO BUILD CAPACITY, SKILLS AND SECURITY FOR ARTISTS AND THE SECTOR

# Our community

CRAFT ACT'S SUCCESS IN RECENT YEARS IS THE RESULT OF A DIVERSE AND CONNECTED COMMUNITY AT THE HEART OF WHAT WE DO AND HOW WE DO IT







# Continuous improvement

CRAFT ACT'S CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT WITH QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE EVALUATION TOOLS MEASURE SUCCESS AGAINST OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, VALUES AND GOALS

Craft ACT's culture of continuous improvement employs qualitative and quantitative evaluation tools to measure success

#### **Craft ACT metrics**

- Artist participation
- Income generation for artists
- Public program participation
- Exhibition outcomes and attendance
- Membership
- Financial growth
- Communications reach
- Community engagement – volunteers, staff, interns

#### **DESIGN Canberra metrics**

- Attendance
- Program delivery
- Audience development and profile
- Income generation for artists and designers
- Diversity of participation
- Visibility and impact
- Partnerships

The Craft ACT annual report is an opportunity to monitor progress against strategic priorities and is tabled at the annual general meeting each March. Every month, the Craft ACT board of management receives a report against the strategic priorities and Craft ACT staff meetings agendas reflect these priorities.

This ensures that all Craft ACT activities are aligned to our mission, vision and strategy.



Visit [craftact.org.au](http://craftact.org.au)  
[designcanberrafestival.com.au](http://designcanberrafestival.com.au)  
0262629333  
[craftact@craftact.org.au](mailto:craftact@craftact.org.au)

## CRAFT ACT: CRAFT + DESIGN CENTRE

Craft ACT: Craft and Design Centre is supported by 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.

Level 1, North Building, 180 London Circuit, Canberra  
Office: Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm  
Gallery + Shop: Tue - Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 12pm -4pm