



AUSTRALIAN DESIGN ALLIANCE

Australian Design Alliance
PO Box 60, Potts Point NSW 1335
info@australiandesignalliance.com
www.australiandesignalliance.com

National Cultural Policy – Australian Design Alliance Submission

Introduction

The Australian Design Alliance (AdA) welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the National Cultural Policy discussion.

The Government has made a commitment to consider a national design policy that embraces the artistic, cultural and innovation and industry elements of design and seeks to embed strategic design across government. The AdA has been and will continue to work with federal and state governments to make a national design policy a reality for Australia.

This submission focuses on the need for a national design policy but there are several elements that are clearly critically important to the cultural vision outlined in the National Cultural Policy discussion paper and in the separate submissions made by the AdA member organisations.

One way in which the AdA can contribute to the crafting of the National Cultural Policy would be for us to facilitate a strategic design thinking session with the architects of the policy. Should the Government be interested in pursuing this approach, then the AdA would welcome the opportunity to show how design thinking can offer solutions that work. Using designers, as opposed to the traditional 'think tanks' and management consultants, and applying design in the policy context can provide a better result because designers are practised at tackling working problems from developing an idea through to implementation while never losing sight of the vision and the user – in this case the Australian people are the users and contributors but it is through the design oculus that we frame a policy envisioning our culture and creativity.

“Nations that value design consistently rate above Australia in design performance and innovation, and actively promote design in their economies. The Scandinavian countries and Great Britain offer examples of how Australia is being out-thought by embracing the power of design thinking.”¹ *His Excellency, Michael Bryce AM AE*

Design is often absent or alternately taken for granted. Yet it is instrumental in successful citymaking and the creation of successful place. This is directly related to our expressed culture and creativity.. The streets and lanes we occupy, the way we

¹ Australian Design Alliance, *Launch event report*, October 2010

consume/conserves energy, the spaces available for multigenerational activity and social engagement, the cars we drive, the clothes we wear, the words we read, the houses we live in, the parks we play in, the products we use, the services we access – schools, hospitals, airports, transport, roads, libraries, cinemas – design at some level is at the core of our day to day lives.

Design is a process to devise innovative solutions in response to technical, commercial, social, ethical, cultural, environmental and/or aesthetic requirements of a problem. A design solution is realised through manufacture, production, construction or implementation of a service.

To understand Australian design – its nature, contribution, aesthetic, potential – we need to undertake the research required to ensure that we understand the Australian design industry in all its facets and the steps we collectively need to take to invest in it and capitalise on it for the future.

A new national voice for Australian design

“(The AdA) is the beginning of a voice that could lift this country from its dependence on other people’s ideas, from its apathy about the build environment, from the sense of us lagging behind in the innovation and creativity spectrum that some significant countries have already established.”² *His Excellency, Michael Bryce AM AE*

The Australian Design Alliance (AdA) is the peak body for Australian design representing; architecture; urban design; landscape architecture; industrial design; object and graphic design; fashion design; design for stage and screen; visual arts; craft and media arts; design awards; and design education and research. Launched at the Sydney Opera House in October last year, 100 of Australia’s leading designers, architects, planners, artists, educators and policy makers met for the first time to contribute to a vision statement and establish a set of priorities.

AdA Members

Australian Craft and Design Centres (ACDC)
Australian Graphic Design Association (AGDA)
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects
Australian Network for Art and Technology (ANAT)
Australian Production Design Guild (APDG)
Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS)
Council of Textile and Fashion Industries of Australia (TFIA)
Craft Australia
Design Institute of Australia (DIA)
Good Design Australia, Australian International Design Awards
National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA)
Planning Institute of Australia – Urban Design Chapter

Australian Institute of Architects (AIA) (observer)

AdA Patron

His Excellency Mr Michael Bryce AM, AE

² Australian Design Alliance, *Launch event report*, October 2010

The AdA's vision is to develop a culture of design in Australia to strengthen economic competitiveness, innovation, creativity and sustainability. Its mission is to achieve greater recognition and valuing of Australian design by governments, business and community, plus greater innovation and collaboration within the design sector together with the application of strategic design approaches across all sectors.

The launch event mandated three resolutions for the AdA to pursue a national design agenda based on:

1. National design policy linked to Australia's innovation agenda;
2. Design education integrated at all educational levels;
3. Case studies demonstrating how good design can contribute to economic growth through supporting superior business models and improved public sector service delivery.

In its first few months, the ADA operated primarily on the voluntary efforts of its member organisations. A year ago, ADA was the grateful recipient of modest funding from the NSW Department of Trade and Investment and was able to employ an executive staff member two days a week. This has resulted in a lively program of activity and great deal has been achieved including a visit to Australia by Sir George Cox, previous Chairman of the UK Design Council and author of the extremely influential Cox Report.

The ADA's purpose and agenda are national in focus and require national support for the organisation's core operations. The industry bodies are contributing finances and administration services to the value of \$30,000. However, this is not sufficient even to maintain the current level of operations. Matching support from the Commonwealth would enable the design industry to make a substantial contribution to the implementation of the National Design Policy (see Recommendation 2 below)

Recommendation 1:

That the Commonwealth Government contributes to the validation, promotion and embedding of design in Australia's social and economic fabric through providing \$30,000/year over 3 years of operational support (matching that provided by the design industry) for the Australian Design Alliance as the peak industry body for design in Australia.

A National Design Policy

The world is moving at a faster pace. Nations, cities and communities that imagine, create and innovate are replacing the traditional factory floor economy. For Australia to remain competitive in this changing global environment, we need to put in place the right conditions for creativity and innovation to flourish and respond to key policy challenges such as growing business, employment, education and sustainability. Design is an integral element of successful policy development across all economic, social and cultural spheres and is a key driver for meeting these challenges.

The AdA is committed to working with all levels of government to increase the level of engagement with design. Taking a lead from governments globally, Australia needs to include design in its national policy platform. Design at every level needs Commonwealth Government attention to: increase the competitiveness of the design

sector itself; embed design and design thinking into business innovation; use design thinking to improve public sector service delivery; boost the international reputation for Australian design; and enhance appreciation of design at home.

A national design policy and agenda for action will propel the capacity of good design to improve economic growth and create better outcomes across the full spectrum of public policy, beyond just those listed above.

The AdA has proposed policy options to forward the full potential for Australian design both nationally and internationally. Key to these options is ways in which we can strengthen the design sector so that our designers are equipped to contribute to increasing demand for their services in traditional and non-traditional ways to build business and national capacity. The Government is developing a position paper and the AdA is providing industry input to this process.

This is a starting point. There are many other things that can be, and are being done in the design space by governments, business, community and individuals that, together with this proposal for national commitment, will make design a key driver for a sustainable Australia.

Recommendation 2:

That the Commonwealth Government adopts and implements a National Design Policy.

The AdA's five key recommendations for such a policy are:

Key Recommendation 1: National Design Policy

The Federal Government to develop a national policy for design that is embedded across the full spectrum of government policies but specifically linked to Australia's Innovation Agenda and cultural and urban design policies.

Key Recommendation 2: Design for Government

Immerse design into the culture of the public sector and place design at the core of policy development and service delivery.

Key Recommendation 3: Design for Business

Help Australian businesses to realise their full potential for sustainable growth and international competitiveness by placing design at the core of their business.

Key Recommendation 4: Design Education

Ensure that design thinking is integrated into all our systems of learning from schools to tertiary courses and professional education.

Key Recommendation 5: Profiling Design

Invest in the design industry to raise the profile for Australian design both nationally and internationally.

More detailed recommendations that relate to the five key recommendations are contained in Attachment 1.



Driving Australian Design Australian Design Alliance Proposals for a National Design Policy

The Australian Design Alliance (AdA) has developed these practical strategies for a national design policy for Australia. Background research including a range of case studies that demonstrate the capability of the design sector to add value in key areas is underway.

Please forward any comments on these recommendations to Lisa Cahill, AdA Executive Director, info@australiandesignalliance.com.

5 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Recommendation 1: National Design Policy

The Federal Government to develop a national policy for design that is embedded across the full spectrum of government policies but specifically linked to Australia's Innovation Agenda and cultural and urban design policies.

Recommendation 1.1 Establish a Federal Government interdepartmental/industry committee to develop national design policy either as a stand alone policy or to integrate design across the full policy spectrum. Representatives could be drawn from the following portfolio departments: Innovation, Industry, Science and Research; Arts; Regional Development; Sustainability and Environment; Education; Health; Human Services; Infrastructure and Transport; Trade; Small Business; Communications and the Digital Economy.

The AdA would represent the design industry on this committee and facilitate sector wide consultations on the development of design policy.

Recommendation 1.2 Ensure design experts are represented on key bodies such as the Innovation Industry Councils, IP Australia, Commercialisation Australia, National Measurement Institute, as well as Council of Australian Government committees and taskforces.

Key Recommendation 2: Design for Government

Immerse design into the culture of the public sector and place design at the core of policy development and service delivery.

- Recommendation 2.1 Building on the work of the Management Advisory Committee, *Empowering Change: fostering innovation in the Australian Public Service*, educate public sector leaders on the value of design as a tool for innovation in policy development and service delivery.
- Recommendation 2.2 Use design to achieve innovation across government but specifically to tackle the ‘wicked’³ problems and find new solutions in the areas of climate change, health, immigration and border security. Policy and project development budgets should include funding to employ designers from the earliest stages of development and a design thinking approach should be used to ensure that the most creative and innovative possibilities are explored.
- Recommendation 2.3 Establish processes for ensuring Australian-centred design excellence in the procurement of public goods and services.
- Recommendation 2.4 Ensure that good design is part of the assessment criteria for all urban development projects at all levels of government.
- Recommendation 2.5 In accordance with Australia’s National Research Priorities and National Innovation Priorities⁴, the Government should invest in high quality research to better understand and improve the nature of Australian design and to provide an evidence base for future decision making.

Key Recommendation 3: Design for Business

Help Australian businesses to realise their full potential for sustainable growth and international competitiveness by placing design at the core of their business.

- Recommendation 3.1 Educate business leaders about how companies can markedly affect their bottom line by integrating design into their business strategy as well as in the development and delivery of their products and services.
- Recommendation 3.2 Examine models for transforming business through

³ "Wicked problem" is a phrase used in social planning to describe a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wicked_problems

⁴ *Powering Ideas: An innovation agenda for the 21st Century*, Commonwealth of Australia 2009

design, such as New Zealand's *Better by Design* , Queensland's *Ulysses* pilot and Victoria's pilot Design Integration Program for wider application.

Recommendation 3.3 Enable industry to integrate design expertise through offering incentives for prototyping within manufacturing.

Recommendation 3.4 Establish a design grants program to enable design micro-enterprises to develop new work to the stage where it is ready to manufacture and take to market, and to support the promotion of their work to international markets.

Key Recommendation 4: Design Education

Ensure that design thinking is integrated into all our systems of learning from schools to tertiary courses and professional education.

Recommendation 4.1 Ensure that high quality design education is a key component of the national curriculum for schools to ensure that students have the opportunity to learn about all facets of design including the various disciplines, history, theory, techniques, aesthetics, practical skill and the design thinking approach to problem solving.

Recommendation 4.2 Ensure that design courses at tertiary level teach students how to use design thinking methodologies to equip them to apply this in their professional practice.

Recommendation 4.3 Ensure that design courses at tertiary level teach students about sustainable design and ways to embrace this in their professional practice.

Recommendation 4.4 Develop a sophisticated program of design thinking workshops for industry and corporate leaders.

Recommendation 4.5 Develop an education program of regular workshops for local government planners on how design can be used as part of the planning process for improved urban outcomes.

Recommendation 4.6 Develop a professional development program for design practitioners on sustainable design practices.

Key Recommendation 5: Profiling Design

Invest in the design industry to raise the profile for Australian design both nationally and internationally.

Recommendation 5.1 Fund the AdA for a period of three years to equip this body to undertake the industry initiatives necessary to strengthen the contribution and capability of the design

sector and raise the profile for Australian design both across Australia and in the international arena.

Recommendation 5.2

Examine the various design awards programs and devise a strategy to better communicate Australian achievements in design.

Recommendation 5.3

Establish a Prime Minister's Award for design to be awarded annually as part of the Australian International Design Awards.

Recommendation 5.4

Implement a globally recognised design mark that is used on products and services that have been nominated for or awarded an Australian International Design Award.

Recommendation 5.5

Develop and promote a calendar of key events held in Australia each year to promote Australian design.

Recommendation 5.6

Encourage support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander design and cultures-based innovation, in partnership with Indigenous communities.