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## ***The Code of Practice for the Professional Australian Visual Arts, Craft and Design Sector.***

### **APPENDIX E**

#### **Background to the Code, VAIGRP and Code Acknowledgements, Endorsements**

##### **The Code of Practice for the Professional Visual Arts, Craft and Design Sector, National Association for the Visual Arts, (2009).**

This appendix outlines the background to the development of the Code, the Visual Arts Industry Guidelines Research Project acknowledgements, acknowledgements for the development of the first and second editions of the Code and endorsements for the first and second editions.

The acknowledgements for the third edition are published within that edition.

The Code can be purchased from NAVA [www.visualarts.net.au/shop](http://www.visualarts.net.au/shop)

#### **Background to the Code: The Visual Arts Industry Guidelines Research Project (VAIGRP)**

The first edition of the Code of Practice for the Australian Visual Arts and Craft Sector was one of the major research outcomes of the Visual Arts Industry Guidelines Research Project (VAIGRP).

VAIGRP was a three-year collaborative partnership set up between academia and industry in 1998 to document the professional, legal and industrial conditions operating across the whole of the Australian visual arts and craft sector. The range of the VAIGRP investigations made it unique. The research team of chief investigators brought together leaders in their fields from law, industrial relations, economics, academic art theory and education, arts advocacy and policy and curatorship.

At the centre of all of the VAIGRP's diverse investigations was the concept of the artist/craft practitioner as a working professional rather than as an aesthete, that is, as someone with a considerable stake in the world of employment and commerce. The practitioner was considered in relationship to employers and 'end-users' of the art/craft work 'product' such as agents, commissioners, galleries, retail outlets and collectors.

VAIGRP also acknowledged that the work relationships of the art/craft professional often extend beyond the visual arts and craft sector. Few practitioners in Australia manage to make a living solely through the sales of their work, even fewer through philanthropic support, supplemented by royalties, sponsorships, commissions, residencies and prizes. Some make their principal living in art/craft-related careers such as tertiary teaching in art and design schools or in administrative roles. Many more supplement their income over their working lives with a number of jobs, some arts-related, some not. Rather than seek continuous paid

employment in a full-time arts or non-arts-related occupation, some of the latter group may make the choice to work casually or part-time in a less demanding occupation. They may consider time to practice their art or craft more important than the opportunity to earn a higher income and have continuity of employment.

The 'typical' portrait of the artist/craft practitioner that emerges is of a low-income, largely self-employed person, often without any institutional affiliation, in precarious and irregular paid employment. In the art/craft world, he or she is forced to negotiate in a highly competitive marketplace where supply far exceeds demand. What this means is that the artist or craft practitioner will probably miss out on some of the worker's entitlements and benefits, such as superannuation, which those permanently employed take for granted. It also means that the artist/craft practitioner is relatively vulnerable to exploitation. Either through the artist/craft practitioner's own lack of information or in the absence of guidelines for the conduct of dealers, competitions and the like, artists and craft practitioners may find themselves in the position of signing away their legal rights or being underpaid for their work and professional services.

The working lives of practitioners are increasingly characterised by multiplicity in the types of work undertaken, irregularity in their conditions and timing, and lower levels of unionisation. Their activities may range from permanent work to contracted employment for set periods, to part-time or casual work. Such diversity is becoming the norm for the community as a whole. The findings of this study, therefore, had application beyond the visual arts and craft sector.

The VAIGRP aimed to tackle these fundamental issues both theoretically and practically, that is, to develop flexible, ethical guidelines to improve the working lives of practitioners. Without the artistic creators, there would be no visual arts and craft 'industry'. The VAIGRP research and guidelines contained in this Code of Practice were also intended to strengthen and develop the sector as a whole.

### **VAIGRP Acknowledgements**

VAIGRP was a collaborative project of the National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA), the Power Institute for Art and Visual Culture, the Australian Centre of Industrial Relations Research and Training (acirrt), both at the University of Sydney, the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW), the School of Economics and Finance at Macquarie University and Simpsons Solicitors.

The project was supported through a Strategic Partnerships for Industry Research and Training (SPIRT) grant from the Australian Research Council, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, funding from the Australia Council, the Commonwealth Government's arts funding and advisory body and financial contributions from the Art Gallery of New South Wales and Simpsons Solicitors.

#### *The Visual Arts Industry Guidelines Research Project Team*

##### Investigators

Tamara Winikoff Executive Director of the National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA).

Terry Smith previously Professor of Contemporary Art and Director of the Power Institute: Foundation for Art and Visual Culture at the University of Sydney.

Ron Callus Associate Professor and Director of the Australian Centre for Industrial Relations Research and Training (ACIRRT) at the University of Sydney.

Tony Bond General Manager of Curatorial Services and Chief Curator of Western Art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Shane Simpson principal of Simpsons Solicitors.

David Throsby Professor of Economics in the School of Economics and Financial Studies at Macquarie University.

##### Research Officers

Virginia Hollister

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The VAIGRP produced a number of other industry research documents and these can be accessed online at the NAVA website:  
<http://www.visualarts.net.au/readingroom>

## **Code Acknowledgements**

### *First edition*

The development of the first draft of the Code of Practice would not have been possible without the contributions of the artist/craft practitioners, gallery and retail outlet managers and directors, agents, commissioners, competition, prizes and award managers, residency and workshop managers and other industry professionals who participated in the Visual Arts Industry Guidelines Research Project. Many arts and craft organisations have been called upon to provide specialist advice and have been generous with time, information and recommendations. AFWA, RMIT Gallery Victoria, Craft Australia, Canberra Contemporary Art Space and Craftsouth generously co-organised focus groups and public meetings in Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra and Adelaide. These meetings were funded by Arts WA, Arts Victoria, Arts ACT and Arts SA.

### *Second edition*

Those who had input into the 2nd edition of the Code (including those who participated in the Fees and Wages Meeting in July 2003) were: Ron Callus and Steve Jackson, acirrt; Michael Keighery, Chair of NAVA, and Head of Program, Fine Arts and Senior Lecturer at the University of Western Sydney; Sophie O'Brien, Biennale of Sydney; Dominique Nagy, Museum and Galleries Foundation NSW; Nick Tsoutas, Artspace; George Dann, Australia Council; Deborah Ely, NSW Ministry for the Arts; Nick Waterlow, Ivan Dougherty Gallery; Therese Kenyon, Manly Art Gallery and Museum; Brian Parkes, Object: Australian Centre for Craft and Design; and Blair French, Performance Space. Ian MacDonald, Chris Sexton, Seth Richardson, Brian Tucker and Adrian Brookes gave further advice for sections of Chapter 6. The Australian Society of Authors, Australian Society of Book Illustrators, Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance and VISCOPY gave advice and allowed reproduction of their rates for sections of the Chapter 5. Tony Bond and Michael Meszaros also gave advice on *Commissioning* for Chapter 2, and Shane Simpson and Tamara Winikoff on the whole text. Revisions for the Second Edition were also assisted by research completed as part of the *Report of the Contemporary Visual Arts and Craft Enquiry* (Myer Report).

## **Endorsements**

The following organisations have endorsed or acknowledged the *Code of Practice for the Australian Visual Arts and Craft Sector* (First Edition) as a best practice manual.

Art Gallery of NSW  
Arts Law Centre of Australia  
Arts South Australia  
Artists Foundation of Western Australia  
Artworkers Alliance  
Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (ANKAAA)  
Association of Western Australian Art Galleries  
Australian Network for Art and Technology (ANAT)  
Biennale of Sydney  
Contemporary Art Organisations Australia (CAOs)  
Copyright Council of Australia  
Craft Australia  
Craft Organisations Australia (COA)  
Craft Queensland  
Create Australia  
Desart Incorporated  
Local Government Association and Shires Association of NSW  
Museums & Galleries Foundation of NSW  
Museums Australia  
National Exhibition Touring Support (NETS Australia)  
Print Council of Australia  
Public Galleries Association of Victoria  
Regional Arts Australia

Territory Craft  
Visual Arts/Craft Board, Australia Council for the Arts  
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The Australian Commercial Galleries Association (ACGA) was a partner with NAVA and the Australia Council for the Arts in producing the Code of Practice for Commercial Galleries and the Artists They Represent.