



Australia, arguably, has more inventive talent per head of population ... but where's the economic return? If we do nothing and let the current situation prevail, we will be lost

Australia, arguably, has more creative and inventive talent per head of population than any other nation and we have a wealth of natural and manufactured resources compared to many of our overseas competitors. Yet, in the main, we do not turn that into an economic return. Imports continue to grow. What has to change?

ISS Institute CEO, Carolynne Bourne AM says there are four key drivers:

1. The Trades

The trades are the economic backbone of our economy, yet they are often unseen and have no direct voice as to issues which are in their field of expertise. The ISS Institute values the trades as equal, but different to professionals. The trades are educationally, economically and socially disadvantaged against those in professional disciplines and this has a direct flow on effect to our economy, particularly in traditional areas such as building and construction.

At the ISS Institute we have sought the views of trades men and women since 1990 - the message is clear:

“There is no structured, accredited course through which I can develop my talent and capabilities to 'Master Artisan' level which is recognised by my peers here and overseas”.

“Of the trades people we have spoken to over the years, not one has wanted to undertake a Diploma or Degree, they want their own pathway, equal, but different to professionals from a university system. They want a 'Master Artisan' credential”. Without this level, there is a flow on effect:

- Lack of industry standard.
- Lack of high level, advanced and specialised skills and knowledge.
- Lack of ability to create quality products and services to compete in local and overseas markets.
- Lack of career opportunity - no lifelong learning.
- Our nation's intellectual and skills resources are diminished as the older Masters retire, or die, with their experience gained over a lifetime lost.
- Lack of models/mentors for our young people to aspire to - who are the 'Ian Thorpe's' for carpentry, stonemasonry, plasterering, cabinetmaking?
- No specific incentive to attain excellence, or to be innovative.
- Parents actively discourage their children away from the trades for they know there is no lifetime career path open to them.

It is not surprising that the 'World Class Skills for World Class Industries' report, (p 78) stated "Not one out of 100 year 10 kids were interested in an apprenticeship".

The ISS Institute has the way forward through its "Master Artisan Framework for Excellence. A New Model for Skilling the Trades". Discussions are currently being held with The Hon. Andrew Robb AO, MP, Minister for Vocational and Further Education as to its implementation.

The other three drivers are:

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2. 'Skills Deficiencies' • 'Skills Sortages'

The ISS Institute focuses on 'skill deficiencies'. 'Deficiency' is where a demand for labour has not been recognised and training is unavailable in Australian educational institutions. This arises where skills are acquired on-the-job, gleaned from published material or from working and/or study overseas. 'Skill shortages', is when there is a unmet and recognised demand for labour. "Like Edward de Bono says, the problem is problem you don't know you have".

Overcoming Australia's skill deficiencies is vital to long-term economic prospects and short-term sustainability of sectors which are at risk of disappearing, of not being developed or leaving our shores to be taken up by our overseas competitors. In this scenario the only feasible option is to achieve a high skill, high value-added economy in order to build a significant future in the local and international marketplace.

Australia's current methods for skills acquisition is not effective in recognising and broaching these skill deficiencies.

2. Design as a Business Tool. Design is Problem Solving

Design is crucial to the economic future of our nation. Australia needs to understand and learn the value of design, the benefits of good design and for it to become part of everyday language, decision making and choice.

Design is as important to the child exploring the possibilities of the world, the architect as it is to the electrician placing power points or the furniture designer working with a cabinet-maker and manufacturer. As such, design is vested in every member of our community and touches every aspect of our lives.

3. Think and Work in an Holistic Approach along the Supply Chain. Collaboration and Communication

In her ISS "Australian design Italian markets forum" Luisa Fazio, Italy said time and again 'market your brand', 'understand trends', 'forecasting', 'research the market/your clients', 'experiment and explore' then 'research again' and 'collaborate with master artisans, manufacturers, retailers, suppliers'.

"Australia needs to change the culture of how we think and work, 'who' we work with and have 'design' embedded into the whole process from concept through production to recycling" says Bourne.

"The ISS Institute has been delivering successful programs where we set up teams - designers are linked with a trades/technician/manufacturer. Together they create a prototype for manufacture towards import replacement and export potential. The workshops provide a unique opportunity to experience working in a team that is focused on nurturing creative excellence, using materials innovatively and ensuring financial viability".

British designer now living and working in Milan, Marc Krusin, has been awarded a prestigious ISS Institute/Victorian Government (Design) Fellowship, sponsored by the Victorian Government (Office of Training and Tertiary Education). In May 2007, RMIT University will host Krusin's workshops, which celebrates ingenuity, economy of form and the innovative use of materials - from concept to prototype for manufacture. Krusin will share with workshop participants his expertise and insights regarding design and introduce them to the history, context and theories. Krusin will also examine the necessity of designing for a sustainable future and the strategies required for dealing with companies, large and small, to maximise the benefits gained by the designer, manufacturer and the client. The workshop brings together designers and manufacturers to create a dynamic fusion which allows innovation to flourish and talent be revealed, making a unique statement.

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About Krusin

Marc Krusin is the Design Manager at Lissoni Associati. He presently runs projects for internationally renowned clients such as Alessi, Kartell, Flos and Wella. Krusin graduated from Leeds Metropolitan University with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in furniture design. In 1998, he and five other designers founded the Milan-based Codice 31. The group debuted in 1998 at Milan's furniture fair "Salone Satellite", an exhibition for young designers. Krusin exhibited his "Doggy Bag" project with Opos in Milan in 1999. His "Hook Me Up" project was exhibited in 2000 along with a selection of his lamps at the "Borderlight" exhibition. Krusin made his first solo appearance in 2002 at "Salone Satellite". In 2003, he appeared with Oliver Layseca and their collaboration on a modular living system.

Krusin is currently working with companies such as Bosa Ceramiche, Fontana Arte, Pallucco, Caop d'opera, Saporiti and Viccarbe.

Workshop 1

Workshop 2

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