

23 OCTOBER 2024
EKL0088

Productivity Commission
4 National Circuit
Barton ACT 2600

via email: communications@pc.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: PARTICIPATION IN YOUR INQUIRY.

I am a PhD candidate in the final stages of my thesis at the University of Canberra, Faculty of Arts and Design. I have been conducting an investigation which involves principles in Standards, Protocols and Due Diligence criteria in design and manufacture in Australia that may have social economic and environmental benefits particularly in the area of the circular economy, durability and lifespan, of all products.

My background has been in private practice with over 40 years' experience in Industrial Design. My PhD research has identified where and how advances can be made to the design of products if appropriate guidelines and protocols are used, particularly at the beginning of the design process. This research can greatly benefit education, industrial design practice and manufacture.

I began this study in 2019 titled "*An Investigation into Product Quality with Particular Respect to Sustainability*", in the context of the circular economy and the criteria important to product lifespan (i.e., Good Design).

My PhD investigated how the Quality of Design is developed as a product is created and evolves through three associated Domains, namely, 1. Clients / Designers / Manufacturers, 2. Design Awards Programs, and 3. Standards / Testing authorities and Consumer Protection Organisations. Within these 3 Domains, the investigation has demonstrated that design criteria such as Durability and Lifespan along with other Sustainability principles need to be updated to facilitate "Good Design Outcomes" that includes the dematerialisation of processes, the optimization in material resources and the reduction of waste. The investigation has highlighted the need in Australia to create greater awareness and promotion of sustainable consumer products that are durable and longer lasting based on circular economy principles.

A conclusion has been informed by critical reviews of published literature and interviews with representatives from the 3 associated Domains (industrial designers in companies and in private practice, top management in manufacturing organisations, adjudicators in design awards programs and executives in the Australian Standards and Quality Testing and Consumer Protection Organisations). The investigation identified missing protocols (evaluation Criteria, Protocols and Guidelines) that could improve the quality of products, to result in "good design consequences" particularly in the context of the circular economy and sustainability, including investigating Design Awards Programs in Australia and (for further corroboration) internationally.

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The study required the development of “interim conceptual models” of proposed new Design Guidelines, Due Diligence Criteria and Protocols to reference with participants during the research, incorporating sustainability criteria in the form of A Durability Lifespan Classification Method, A Durability / Lifespan Rating Guide and Revised Durability Lifespan Evaluation Criteria for the adjudication of good design in the context of greater durability and longer product lifespans.

An aim of this research is that it will contribute to improving Product Design in Australia and Worldwide in the context that products are designed with circularity in mind, that last longer, to improve the state of the economy, society and particularly the environment. Based on the interview findings with 20 participants who took part in this investigation, if implemented appropriately, the proposed Guidelines and Protocols (derived from this research) will make a significant difference in applying circular economy practices to reduce waste and promote sustainability.

I would love to present these ideas in person to explain how by implementing these simple processes at the beginning of the development / design process, significant benefits can be achieved.

Yours Sincerely,

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