



Australian Government
IP Australia



DESIGNS INITIATIVES



Next steps for reform

Australian designers contribute more than \$67 billion to the economy each year. That makes up 3.5% of GDP on average. We want to better connect designers with the intellectual property (IP) resources they need now. We also want to shape the design rights system to support the Australian economy into the future.

Our reform program builds from the findings of the 2019-2020 review of Australia's design ecosystem. This included research on what drives design innovation and the role of design rights. We continue to explore and consult with the community as reforms progress.

Melbourne Design Week 2021

We are holding a series of virtual events in partnership with the Design Institute of Australia and the Australian Fashion Council. Our Melbourne Design Week 2021 events are:

- **Redesigning designs: The future of design protection in Australia** (29 March)
- **The future of iterative registered design protection** (31 March)
- **Uncovering IP: An overview of IP for design-intensive industries** (1 April)

These events provide a reflection on our findings and information on completed initiatives. They will also give the design community the opportunity to work with us further.

Available now

New online filing service

Customer feedback indicated that many customers found it difficult and time-consuming to apply for design rights.

We are committed to creating a better experience for our customers. We have incorporated customer feedback to make improvements to how you file a design.

As part of the transformation of our online services platform, we have made the experience of applying for a design faster and easier. You can use the feedback tool within the platform to share what's working well, what could be improved, and to rate your experience.

Refreshed web content

To complement our new filing experience, we have refreshed our designs website content. This content provides design rights education and focuses on:

- the basics of design rights
- the application process
- managing and protecting a design

Coming soon

New Bill to benefit Australian designers

On 2 December 2020 the [Designs Amendment \(Advisory Council on Intellectual Property Response\) Bill 2020](#) was introduced into the Senate and is currently before the Parliament for consideration.

The Bill will:

- introduce a 12-month grace period for the filing of design applications
- make improvements to clarify and simplify the designs system
- provide more flexibility for designers.

The grace period will protect designers who publish their design before filing for protection. This could be either accidentally or because they did not know that they needed to file for protection first.

Education and awareness resources

Our research confirmed that many in the design ecosystem have limited knowledge of:

- design rights
- the purpose of design rights and other IP
- how to use IP in a broader business strategy.

We heard that many designers and businesses don't know their options or where to find resources until it's too late.

We are collaborating with peak industry bodies, tertiary institutions, and design businesses to create useful educational resources. These resources will help people understand how IP can assist them in their business/design journey.

More information will be available in the coming months.

Designs Examination Manual refresh

Designs experts rely on the [Designs Examination Manual](#) to make important decisions about IP. Our recent update provides a more modern interface, and we are now working on the content and structure. We are collaborating with editing experts to refresh this critical information source.

Did you know that we have a contact centre where designers can ask questions about IP?

Call 1300 65 10 10 for general enquiries between 9am and 5pm AEDT, Monday to Friday.

Into the future

There are still questions about the future of the Australian design rights system.

The linear registration process does not suit how many in the design community work. Their process involves rounds of iteration over time. We are exploring how to better support this iteration and increase confidence in how designs are protected throughout their lifecycle. This will be the subject of one of our [online events](#) at Melbourne Design Week 2021 (31 March).

We are also exploring:

- how the design rights system could accommodate parts of products and non-physical virtual products
- how to address confusion with the two-step process for securing design right protection.

These complex issues are being assessed based on how they could benefit the Australian economy. For more information, please see our [policy register](#).

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