



# THE POTTER'S PLEDGE

As clay-workers we connect directly with the earth in the making of our forms. Molecules of clay matter take billions of years to evolve, and we acknowledge our practice builds on this history through human interaction as clay passes through our hands.

We advocate for the social and cultural value arising from our ceramics practices and our active choice to work with clay carries with it a responsibility to respect the earth's finite resources by identifying where materials are sourced, how they are packaged, transported and processed, and to minimise the negative social and environmental impacts of their consumption in our studios.

We pledge to make informed sustainable and ethical choices concerning the materials and energy required to create our work with respect for environmental consequences and invite you to consider the following points:

## MATERIALS

Be informed and ask questions:

- Find out the origin of your materials and use local where possible to avoid excess transportation.
- If extracting your own clay, do so with care for the land. You may need to ask permission from landowners and/or indigenous custodians.
- Identify the social and cultural impact of the material extraction.
- Only take what you need.

## FIRING KILNS

Take steps to mitigate the environmental impact of firing kilns:

- Edit your work before firing and recycle sub-par pieces. Your critical eye is a powerful tool of sustainability.
- Only fire the kiln when it is full.
- Develop efficient firing schedules – short soaks below temperature can reduce your fuel consumption at top temperature (half your fuel is consumed in achieving the last 100 degrees).
- Consider raw glazing or firing once.
- Source renewable energy to fire your kiln, i.e. purchase wind or solar electricity, fire with wood and plant more trees.
- Buy emission off-sets.

## ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS

Reduce, reuse, reclaim, recycle, repurpose

This mantra applies in the studio and can lead to an authentic and resourceful practice by following these guidelines:

- Reclaim and recycle clay turnings and scraps.
- Wash and reuse plastics.
- Donate seconds to charity; failed pieces can be used for mosaic or let someone else use them.
- Failed work can be crushed and used for horticultural drainage or consider finely grinding scrap ceramics for inclusion into new sculptural clay bodies.
- Use recycled paper and cardboard for packing pots. When bubble wrap is the only option secure with rubber bands to promote easy reuse.
- Capture wastewater responsibly and treat/dispose/reuse where possible.
- Reclaim scrap glaze by installing a scrap glaze bucket in your studio. Adjust as necessary to make a liner glaze for closed forms or garden pots.
- Be efficient when using transport for studio practice. Public transport or carpooling for delivery can consume less transportation fuel.
- Employ environmentally safe disposal methods. Bind waste materials into fired tiles or pebbles for yard use rather than disposing of it into the ground, and subsequently our waterways.

This text was written by Clay Matters, a group of Australian ceramicists concerned about the environmental impact of our activities. We came together during a hard Covid lockdown in August 2020 via a Zoom session hosted by The Australian Ceramics Association. We now meet by Zoom to share thoughts, educate ourselves and discuss how we can create positive change.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the country on which we create and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have never ceded ownership. We acknowledge that sustainability is not a new concept for First Nations people and that areas of thinking sustainably are built on indigenous thinking and practice.

The Potter's Pledge is our first project. We are also working on green energy deals for potters. We acknowledge our limitations and are open to positive discussion and change.

Signed by Clay Matters group members – Pie Bolton, Amanda Bromfield, Katrina Carling Vicki Grima, Lene Kuhl Jakobsen, Kate Jones, Holly Macdonald, Cinda Manins, Montessa Maack Sophie Morris, Judith Roberts, Jane Sawyer, Mads Thornton-Smith and Ri Van Veen.

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