

Cabochon Cutting Classes

Usually the first class that a new member of NDLC will attend, unless they can demonstrate familiarity and competence in gem cutting.

The word cabochon derives from the French word for head. Most cabochons are cut as oval or round stones with a smoothly curved upper surface and a flat or gently curved back surface, though many shapes are possible. Any stones with polished flat surfaces is faceted, while any stone with incised patterning is a carving, of which there are several types.

The purpose of attending this class is so a new member can gain a basic understanding of the art of cutting stone, as much jewellery has stone(s) set in the piece.

NDLC teaches to the standards of the Competitor and Judging Manual for Lapidary and Allied Crafts as published by Australian Federation of Lapidary & Allied Crafts Association (**AFLACA**), which is the accredited body controlling standards in competition Gem cutting in Australia.

It teaches the right way to cut and polish a gem, introduces the standards by which a gem may be assessed in terms of cut, regularity of form, aesthetic use of stone, finish qualities of a gem and recognition of the value and types of gems.

It introduces the use of a jeweller's loupe, the tool used by jewellery makers worldwide to assess the above listed qualities of a gem. The loupe is a 10 x power magnifying lens, especially made to give accurate vision of a gem's surface and internal qualities, made to be distortion free across its working area and usually colour corrected in order that the colour of a gem may be accurately assessed.

The same lens and standards are used to assess quality of metalwork in a piece of jewellery.

The classes are conducted in an experiential learning manner, basically meaning that a student may start at any time and may be guided and supported in a manner to allow the student to progress at their own pace, as they acquire skills.

In cutting stone a student will learn fine motor skills, patience, an understanding of many skills in identifying and cutting a gem, safety needs in the making of jewellery and the need for accuracy in carrying out tasks and an appreciation of the value of the machinery and tools at your disposal.

All of the skills are transferable to jewellery making classes, where they will be enhanced by the jewellery making process. If you then need to modify a gem to fit a setting, you will have a skillset to accomplish that task.