

Submission to the Committee on Indigenous Affairs: Inquiry into the pathways and participation opportunities for Indigenous Australians in employment and business

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Introduction

Throughout this submission we quote research findings from the National Survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists (hereafter the Survey). The Survey is being undertaken in the Department of Economics at Macquarie University progressively across six regions in remote Australia. The regions are: (1) Kimberley, WA; (2) East and West Arnhem Land, NT; (3) North-West NT and Tiwi Islands; (4) Central Desert, NT and APY Lands, SA; (5) Pilbara and Ngaanyatjarra Lands, WA – to be completed in 2020; and (6) Far North Queensland. The first four regions have been completed and we quote data analysis from these regional results throughout the submission. The last two regions are planned to be completed in 2020.

The objectives of the Survey are to produce a nationally representative database on how individual Indigenous artists in remote Australia establish, maintain and develop their professional arts practice. This database aims to provide reliable data on how cultural knowledge and creative skills are accumulated and transmitted within and between generations in different remote regions and how individual Indigenous artists utilise their knowledge and skills to serve both cultural and economic purposes, while pursuing their artistic aspirations.

In considering recommendations outlined in this submission, it must be understood that there is unlikely to be a single one-size-fits-all strategy applicable to all remote communities. Instead, different needs can be identified in different locations depending on a range of factors. It is important to create alternative pathways and structures that could be suitable for diverse local organisations and cultural producers in different remote areas.

Regional reports can be found here:

- Throsby D., Petetskaya K. (2019) *Integrating art production and economic development in Arnhem Land, Northern Territory*. Research paper: 3/2019. Macquarie University. <https://apo.org.au/node/257301>
- Throsby D., Petetskaya K. (2019) *Integrating art production and economic development in the Central Desert (NT) and the APY Lands (SA)*. Research paper: 1/2019. Macquarie University. <https://apo.org.au/node/252706>
- Throsby D., Petetskaya K. (2019) *Integrating art production and economic development in North West NT and the Tiwi Islands*. Research paper: 2/2019. Macquarie University. <https://apo.org.au/node/253221>
- Throsby D., Petetskaya K. (2016) *Integrating art production and economic development in the Kimberley*. Research paper. Macquarie University. <https://apo.org.au/node/252696>

Employment pathways available to Indigenous Australians

One approach to tackling employment problems in remote Indigenous communities involves training provision for potential jobs, as currently being deployed by the Community Development Program (CDP) and equivalent programs. An alternative is to recognise that significant skills and even employment options already exist in remote communities. The latter approach would seek to support and expand already existing opportunities proven to be working.

The Survey provides insights on the scope of existing skills and experiences that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in remote regions have. An essential concern of the Survey is with the prospects for employment creation through art and cultural production in remote Indigenous communities. The Survey investigates Indigenous artists engagement in 16 major cultural-economic activities being practised in remote areas. The activities identified are listed as follows:

Creative artistic activities:

- Visual arts (painting, photography, printmaking, making sculptures, textiles, carvings, weaving, ceramics, glass, jewellery)
- Performing arts (acting, dancing, playing musical instruments, singing)
- Composing or choreographing
- Writing/ recorded storytelling
- Making a film, TV or radio program, or multimedia work

Cultural maintenance and applied cultural activities:

- Teaching arts and cultural activities to others
- Caring for country
- Being on a cultural board, committee or council
- Interpreting, translating or cross-cultural consulting
- Making Indigenous medicines or cosmetics or providing Indigenous health services
- Fishing, hunting, collecting or preparing bush food
- Participating in ceremonies
- Providing cultural tourism services
- Arts administration
- Arts management
- Cultural archiving, record keeping
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Practically all these activities are transferable to employment. Many of them already generate incomes to Indigenous cultural producers in remote areas, and many have significant potential to generate more.

The Survey findings show that:

- Cultural producers typically have a portfolio of artistic and cultural activities that they engage in throughout the year. For example, on average an artist in Arnhem Land and Central Desert/APY Lands engages in about two artistic activities and about five other cultural activities a year.
- Arts and cultural activities provide flexible work arrangements and can accommodate those wanting to pursue a portfolio of artistic and cultural activities or other types of work.
- Not all artistic and cultural work is currently paid. Using the same example of Arnhem Land and Central Desert/APY Lands - on average an artist receives some form of income for her/his work in at least one of the artistic activities and about two for her/his work in other cultural activities.
- Most artistic and cultural work is carried on regardless of the season.

- In some parts of Australia when activities like tourism are seasonal, artists and cultural producers can focus on different types of products and services to adjust for seasonal changes.
- The most important pathways for transfer of art and cultural industry skills are found within the communities through family and other community members - 66 percent of artists in the Kimberley and Central Desert/APY Lands, 75 percent in North-West NT and Tiwi Islands, 89 percent in Arnhem Land.
- Transfer of cultural knowledge predominantly occurs through family and community members. This is both the most common and the most important pathway to acquire such knowledge.
- Within creative art practices, the most prominent art form is visual arts, with about 80 percent of artists in the Kimberley, Arnhem Land, Central Desert/APY Lands regions currently working in this field; and about 90 percent in the North-West NT and Tiwi Islands region.
- Average working hours per week are 60 hours in Arnhem Land, 47 hours in Central Desert and APY Lands, and 50 hours in North-West NT and Tiwi Islands.
- The creative arts yield about 38 percent on average of an artist's total income from work in Arnhem Land, 32 percent in North-West NT and Tiwi Islands, and 57 percent in Central Desert/ APY Lands.
- Other cultural work brings about 42 percent on average of an artist's total income from work in Arnhem Land, 49 percent in North-West NT and Tiwi Islands, and 15 percent in Central Desert/ APY Lands.
- On average, the share of income from non-cultural work (not directly related to culture) as a proportion of an artist's total income from work is the lowest across all types of work income and across different regions. About one third of artists in Arnhem Land, for example, who are engaged in non-cultural work are not paid for this work. This is partially because the great majority of these unpaid artists (almost nine in ten) are Community Development Program (CDP) participants.¹ The voluntary nature of significant amounts of non-cultural work in remote areas points to the overall lack of opportunities for generating incomes outside the arts sector.
- The median annual incomes of Indigenous artists working in remote areas are generally higher than the median personal income of adult Indigenous individuals (15+) and the median personal income of adult Indigenous individuals in the labour force in remote areas. This can support the argument that working in the arts and cultural sector can provide an important means toward economic improvement for Indigenous people in remote areas.²
- Availability of local resources: many artists rely on accessing their country for gathering materials for their art and cultural production, as a source of knowledge and creative inspiration or/and as a place of practice.
- The use of traditional language is very high among artists. More than 90 percent use their traditional language "most these days" in Arnhem Land and Central Desert/APY Lands, and 55 percent in the North-West NT/Tiwi Islands region.
- Living remotely does not mean a lack of engagement with the outside world. Many artists who work from these locations also travel or send their work Australia-wide and internationally. For

¹ The Community Development Program does not provide a real wage that would be equivalent to the minimum wage in Australia or above; it is a form of job-related assistance for unemployed people in remote areas. This is why in the Survey we treat CDP payments as "government benefits" and not as income that is derived from work, whether the payments are made for arts/cultural work or non-cultural work.

² For example, our estimate of the median annual income of artists in the Central Desert/APY region of around \$23.8 thousand per annum is significantly higher than the median personal income for Indigenous adults in the region (about \$11.7 thousand p.a.) derived from 2016 ABS Census data. This median income of artists in the region is also higher than median personal income of Indigenous people in the labour force (about \$18.2 thousands p.a.).

example, almost two-thirds of artists in the Central Desert/APY Lands region have had their work shown or presented in capital cities, and nearly one in three have been seen overseas.

- Cultural producers from these remote locations participate in research and development in collaboration with different institutions and organisations in Australia and overseas.

Understanding the existing labour force

Data from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) can be used to provide an approximate estimate of the population of Indigenous artists in remote areas. Analysis of the 2014-15 NATSISS data shows that in 2014-15 Australia-wide 24 percent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults (15+) in remote areas and 37 percent in very remote areas had either: made Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander arts or crafts; performed any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander music, dance, theatre, and/or; written or told Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander stories. It needs to be understood, however, that because not all artistic forms are included in the NATSISS survey, these figures are likely to underestimate the numbers of Indigenous artists practising remotely.³

Not all Indigenous artists practising remotely are currently in the labour force. About 37 percent of Indigenous artists in remote areas and about 49 percent in very remote areas were not in the labour force according to the 2014-15 NATSISS survey.

Indigenous artists and cultural producers have high levels of engagement in homelands/outstations - it is more common for these individuals to live in such places (NATSISS 2014-15) than those who are not engaged in artistic and cultural activities. The NATSISS data also show that artists in remote/very remote areas of Australia use their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language more than non-artists nation-wide (48 percent compared to 38 percent respectively).

While the NATSISS data allow insight into participation in artistic activities by artists in one particular year, it is not possible to determine how many artists who for various reasons did not participate in artistic activities in that particular year. The Survey findings show that there is a significant underutilised pool of cultural producers with experience in arts and cultural production who are currently not producing for various reasons. The Survey finds that about a quarter (24 percent) of artists in the Central Desert/APY Lands region, for example, do not engage in their creative artistic activities. And 29 percent of these artists with experience in other cultural activities do not currently participate in them.

Barriers to employment for Indigenous Australians, including access to employment and training

Many jobs in remote areas have challenges such as constraints on accessibility, resources, services, infrastructure and communication, as well as limited access to professional development, training and education. In addition, in many remote areas in Australia, seasonality of many jobs and having to work in a physical environment of climatic extremes add to the list of challenges. Moreover, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals experience difficulties when trying to balance their cultural and work obligations, and there is a strong need for culturally appropriate jobs and jobs flexible enough to accommodate cultural requirements and obligations.

There are other challenges that affect employment of Indigenous Australians. Incomes for Indigenous individuals in remote parts of Australia are significantly lower than for non-Indigenous individuals. Costs of living other than housing are generally higher compared to non-remote areas in Australia. In such circumstances many Indigenous individuals in remote communities rely on one another, which puts additional pressures for those enterprises, organisations and individuals who

³ Indigenous cultural producers participate in many cultural activities, including artistic activities. In this way all artists are cultural producers, yet not all cultural producers are artists. The numbers of Indigenous cultural producers residing in remote areas are largely unknown.

manage to operate successfully to help others. Relying on subsistence living is also essential for most remote artists.

In terms of training for employment, one of the biggest challenges is largely unacknowledged, i.e. the costs of unpaid training that are currently being borne by Indigenous cultural producers themselves when training others. The Survey shows that the most important pathways for transfer of art and cultural skills and knowledge are found within the communities through family and other community members. Learning industry skills directly from family members, elders or other community members is the most important pathway for 66 percent of all artists in the Kimberley, Central Desert (NT) and the APY Lands (SA), for 75 percent of artists in North West NT and the Tiwi Islands, and for 89 percent of artists in Arnhem Land. At present the costs of arts training by family and community members are to a large extent borne by the community and through in-kind payments. Very few funding streams acknowledge artists involved as teachers in their communities and reimburse their work accordingly.

For many artists their main place of work is their home. Overcrowding is one of the biggest challenges that Indigenous communities face. Having to rely on one's home as the only place available for artistic practice can present obvious difficulties and can act as an impediment to the expansion of artistic and cultural production.

The Community Development Program (CDP) presents challenges to Indigenous artists and cultural producers who work remotely. The CDP does not provide a real wage that would be equivalent to the minimum wage in Australia or above; it is a form of job-related assistance for unemployed people in remote areas. During Survey interviews, artists often expressed a dislike for CDP, which they thought was not providing "real jobs". We encountered instances where artists or arts workers loved their work and wanted to work longer hours but could not do so because of the restrictions placed upon them by the CDP scheme. Problems also arise when a worker is called away for family business and is penalised as a result. This can lead to financial stress for the family involved through the imposition of fines, and places an additional workload on art centre staff who are called upon to assist with re-enrolling the individual in the program and to help organise payment of fines. During the Survey, we also encountered occasional examples of some workers who would just be present in order to fulfil their time requirements of the CDP but would not contribute or perform any meaningful or productive work.

Government employment programs and opportunities to build upon effective initiatives

Cultural sector jobs

There is a range of culture-related activities which can also generate incomes and employment in remote areas. As noted earlier, the Survey findings show that there are many skilled and experienced artists and cultural producers who do not earn income through working at some cultural activities. On a local level these activities are often provided on an unpaid basis, for example in the form of: translation and interpretation when dealing with service providers for family or other community members; cross-cultural consulting or language translation in a job that does not include such services in its job description; providing unpaid cultural tourism services for visitors to their communities; organising and performing a welcoming ceremony; and so on. Cultural governance is another area that requires significant time and effort from local cultural producers, with some senior artists spending a great deal of time as directors and members of different boards and committees. A significant amount of this work is also performed on a voluntary basis.⁴ Another example is teaching work. This work involves significant amounts of time for arts and cultural producers (e.g. 77

⁴ Many arts and cultural organisations are not able to pay any sitting fees to their board directors and members, at times due to legislation, and some can only afford token amounts.

percent of artists in Arnhem Land engage in teaching others and spending between 1.5 full days a month and 1 full day a week of their working time). Yet the great majority of this work remains unpaid (e.g. only 30 percent of artists in Arnhem Land receive payments for at least some of their teaching work).

With the right support there could be significantly more economic opportunities generated from these sorts of activities, contributing in turn to developing a stronger arts and cultural sector in remote communities. For example, progress has been made in some areas, for example by the NT Government in the case of translation and interpretation services provided by Aboriginal individuals⁵. At regional, national and international levels some other cultural activities have also been generating economic opportunities for some Indigenous cultural producers who engage in them, for example via cultural archiving and museology services to museums and galleries, or cultural and language education for students coming from outside their communities. However, better awareness and setting of rules and guidelines (perhaps similar to the existing Indigenous Art Code but with inclusion of cultural producers not artists only) for organisations working with Indigenous individuals in remote areas and among the general public is required to acknowledge and remunerate appropriately the various cultural contributions that Indigenous artists and cultural producers have been providing.

The Australia's first mandatory Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP) presents another opportunity to generate more incomes and employment for Indigenous cultural producers who provide cultural services, such as cross-cultural consulting, translation/ interpretation services, cultural governance services and so on.

[Integrating the welfare sector with arts and cultural organisations working on the ground](#)

Successful Indigenous-owned and controlled arts and cultural organisations such as art centres, media organisations, language centres, Indigenous ranger organisations and others are often involved in rectifying some of the many disadvantages that Indigenous Australians face particularly in remote communities. These organisations realise that the efficiency of their operations depends on their artists and other cultural producers, thus many decide to provide welfare services which are usually not part of their core arts-related operations and for which they rarely receive specialised funding. These services may include: home and community care to the aged and people with disability; child protection and family support services; community-based youth justice supervision; account management for their artists; negotiating with Government services on behalf of the artists; providing training and education to community members; documenting and archiving of material of cultural and social significance to the community; and so on. At times, an arts and cultural organisation might be the only organisation in a community that has functional equipment and facilities such as an internet or phone connection, printer, or transportation resources. Located remotely, these organisations often facilitate government and other organisations staff to make contacts and carry out discussions and negotiations with Indigenous clients. In this respect these other organisations take advantage of the art/cultural organisations' role as brokers between artists, other community members and outside stakeholders. At the same time, most art and cultural organisations located remotely receive only small amounts of operational funding when compared

⁵ For example, in NT in the field of translation and interpreting, significant progress has been made in the last 15 years in developing a wider recognition among organisations and individuals working with Aboriginal communities to remunerate the work of translators and interpreters. The NT Government has expanded its Aboriginal Interpreter Service and its training and accreditation of Aboriginal interpreters locally. All these have contributed to generation of additional incomes to those community members who are able to provide such services and reduced the pressure on those who had to do this work unpaid on top of their other duties.

to many other community-based health and welfare organisations funded by Closing the Gap programs⁶.

The social welfare function of arts and cultural organisations as described above needs to be acknowledged and could be formalised. Once acknowledged, pathways need to be created for these organisations (if they wish to) to receive additional support in terms of funding and other resources to provide these social services in a more sustainable way and within the existing welfare structures. A service delivery framework where some state and municipal services are delivered by local arts and cultural NGOs could be explored. These organisations could carry out the actual service delivery (partial or in full) under government supervision, while the composition of delivered services, services eligibility and funding could be determined by the Australian or state and territory governments or municipal governments. Current arrangements for the delivery of welfare services in Australia already involve NGOs. As 'approved providers' these NGOs are formally authorised, contracted and/or funded by government to provide particular services. Often service delivery is shared between these NGOs or local, state and territory governments.

The involvement of local arts and cultural organisations in service delivery would vary from community to community and from organisation to organisation. And those arts and cultural organisations that are Indigenous owned and controlled with a need to provide welfare services to support their cultural producers could be explored as potential providers.

Training and education

School education is recognised by artists as having some part to play in imparting cultural knowledge and skills that complements the essential role of family and community members. Programs such as Indigenous Languages and Cultures (ILC) programs could provide cooperation between local arts and cultural organisations and schools – for example where children visit an arts centre on a regular basis, or where senior artists visit a school to teach arts and cultural skills to children. There is an opportunity to strengthen these educational pathways by acknowledging their long-term nature and providing appropriate funding support.

As noted earlier, learning through observation and participation with a family member or local community member is the most important pathway for transfer of art and cultural skills and knowledge for Indigenous artists and cultural practitioners in remote areas in Australia. There is an opportunity to recognise this hugely important transfer of knowledge and support its continuity via specialised funding. The Australia Council's Chosen program provides one example of how such an intergenerational cultural transfer can be supported.⁷ Inter- and intra-generational cultural transmission in remote communities could be facilitated via local arts and cultural organisations. Many arts centres, ranger organisations, media organisations and culture and language centres and

⁶ Congreve S. (2017) *Summary: The enabling environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art centres*. Ninti One Limited. Alice Springs.

⁷ The Australia Council's Chosen program aims to ensure the vibrancy of cultural inheritance for future generations of First Nations artists by supporting community-led cultural apprenticeships and residencies. It is an example of a culturally based program and self-determination in both program design and delivery. Chosen empowers First Nations communities to take control and plan for how they will nurture younger people from their community in the arts and/or culture. Chosen ensures artistic and cultural knowledge being passed on to the next generation in the most culturally appropriate manner, which is by empowering Senior First Nations people. Chosen sets out to reinvigorate the cultural practice of master apprentice relationships within the arts. The Chosen ensures self-determination in program design and delivery that empowers First Nations communities to take control and plan for how they will nurture younger people from their community in the arts and/or culture.

other organisations recognise the importance of this knowledge transfer and already provide some training that involve local community members as trainers. These organisations rarely have an appropriate budget or funding to support these activities, and workers are most likely unpaid. The Survey findings point to the need to acknowledge the long-term educational benefit that these organisations can provide and their positive impact on arts and cultural production in remote Australia if they are properly supported via continuous funding.

One of the features of organisations working to support art and cultural producers in remote Indigenous communities is the mixing of skills, experiences and knowledge of local Indigenous staff with those of non-Indigenous professionals coming from outside the communities. Incoming experts in turn benefit from training and advice received from senior artists and local Indigenous staff. When these people leave, many years of valuable experience is lost. At the moment, there is very little support that is being provided to non-Indigenous staff working with Indigenous arts and cultural producers remotely. Some programs that could help these staff members with training and knowledge sharing could help to improve retention in these employees and therefore their experience. A database could perhaps be established of culturally experienced professionals who might be available for later engagement as consultants in the arts and cultural sector in the remote areas or in other sectors.

An important function of an arts centre manager is to oversee the skills training of arts workers. This function needs support, especially in centres with only a single manager. Provision of a trainer/trainers can make a great deal of difference.

Various opportunities exist for further education of artists in remote areas, such as short courses and workshops provided through an art centre or a tourist operator, other organisation or agency. These activities may include hosting a visiting artist or educator to train local practitioners in techniques such as printmaking, tourist guiding, fabric design, and so on, and provision of specialised courses for film- and multi-media makers, for example. There is a need for continued funding for such initiatives, including support for workshops and short courses taught by Indigenous senior artists and cultural producers from remote areas.

There is a strong need for business training in remote communities to enable Indigenous artists, cultural producers and other community members to understand better the business side of art and cultural production. Many art centres already educate their artists on business aspects of the arts. More could be done if dedicated funding and support materials could be provided for local organisation to take on this function. These organisations could be particularly effective because they have in-depth understanding of specific business skills needs in their local communities. Because learning locally from family and community members is the most important form of transferring knowledge remotely, options for involving local community members with relevant business experiences as trainers should be explored.

CDP could potentially contribute to the arts and cultural sector development in remote communities. Important changes to the CDP were introduced in March 2019 to address much criticism and increase the CDP applicability in the remote context. These included reduced hours from 25 hours per week in Work for the Dole to 20 hours; introduction of flexible hours; and supporting community advisory boards. Currently CDP requires its participants to complete up to 20 hours of work-like activities with the idea to increase participants' skills and contribute to their community. The program could accommodate on-the-job training of CDP participants for arts and cultural jobs provided by experienced Indigenous cultural producers as trainers.

Infrastructure, equipment and facility support

For many artists their main place of work is at home. In remote areas, some filmmakers work with local media organisations, some writers/storytellers work with language centres, and a large

proportion of visual artists work with art centres. Generally, musicians, dancers and multi-media artists do not have access to widely available facilities to assist in the development of their creative work. Not all remote communities have an operational language centre, media organisation or an art centre and some communities do not have communal facilities. Funding facilities that can be shared by multiple organisations such as schools, ranger organisations, art centres, local services (i.e. hairdressers) and community in general, could be effective to address the shortage of such facilities.

The Survey data provide compelling evidence in support of the need for securing artists' access to country if art and culture are to become a stronger source of economic empowerment for remote Indigenous communities. Being able to travel to important cultural places, gather materials for art production, collect bush food, share knowledge with the others and practice artistic and cultural skills is highly important for arts and cultural production. Many artists however do not have access to motor vehicles to make such trips. Only 55 percent of Indigenous artists in remote areas have access to motor vehicles and 11 percent have access only in an emergency (NATSISS 2014-15). Programs that facilitate such trips could contribute significantly to boosting arts and cultural production in remote areas. These could also take a form of funding grants provided to existing local arts and cultural organisations such as ranger programs, media organisations, language centres, art centres and so on.

The experience of successful enterprises initiated and owned by Indigenous Australians

Working in cross-cultural environments requires bridging different values, rationales, agendas and objectives. Enterprises and organisations that have understood and accommodated this, such as ranger programs and art centres, have been able to function and thrive in these conditions. Their structures allow them to operate within the hybrid realm of the market, embracing government, community/families and the not-for-profit sectors. There is an opportunity to acknowledge such working models and learn from their experiences.

Indigenous owned and controlled art centres play a vital role in the functioning of the Indigenous arts economy. They are active in the visual arts market, forming partnerships and making connections with agents, galleries and art institutions in the capital cities in Australia and overseas. Art centres provide a first point of sale for the work of their artists and a channel linking artists to the wider art market through their participation in art fairs such as the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair, their relationships with dealers, galleries and museums in Australia and abroad, and their marketing presence on the Internet. These organisations also create employment opportunities, both in creative art production and as arts workers engaged in packaging, archiving, art restoration, cataloguing, office work, cleaning, working with visitors and so on. The Survey data show that artists are unequivocal in their recognition of this positive role in affecting their own individual and community circumstances. The Survey findings also demonstrate that artists in communities which currently do not have an art centre recognise the benefits that might accrue if such a centre were to be established in their community.

Ranger groups provide one example of a hybrid organisation operating in remote Indigenous communities. These groups usually receive support from various Government programs for providing environmental services to the Australian community, although some of their activities are market-based – plant harvesting enterprises, for example, or making bush medicine/cosmetics for retail or wholesale sale via local markets, stores and online. The commercial activities of these organisations include fee-for-service contracts with conservation, mining and pastoral industries, providing tourism services (managing campgrounds and conducting tours), the sustainable use of wildlife, feral animal control and sale. These organisations may also participate in the market via trading in Australian Carbon Credit Units. More than 60 percent of Indigenous Protected Areas and

Indigenous ranger groups undertake commercial activities of one sort or another.⁸ Notwithstanding these commercial operations, ranger programs are an extension of existing practices of caring for country that have been undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on a continuous basis over many thousands of years in many parts of Australia.

Sale of the goods and services produced by artists requires a market, and in remote locations accessible markets may exist only through channels leading to customers who may be located far away. However, tourism is a means to bring customers directly to the source of supply. The Territory Arts Trails developed by the Northern Territory Government is an important program that encourages tourist engagement with Indigenous art and culture. The Indigenous Tourism Champions program instigated by Tourism Australia and Indigenous Business Australia identifies Aboriginal-owned tourism businesses offering authentic cultural experiences delivered by Indigenous tour guides and operators. Another potentially successful initiative is the Commonwealth Government's Indigenous Tourism Fund that aims to support Indigenous tourism businesses to start-up or expand.

As one of their principal functions in supporting their artists, some art centres operate a shop and/or a gallery on site and some offer accommodation to visitors. Such activities extend the functions of an art centre beyond simply providing the facilities and resources for artists to practice and move their operations into other business activities. In this respect they function as not-for-profit enterprises, where any surplus generated by their sales or service provision are devoted to furthering their objectives and supporting their continuing operations. And there is a great scope to expand in this area and many art centres and their artists would like to do so. However, such expansions could overstretch art centres' managerial and financial resources as well as commercial expertise, undermining their viability and threatening its future. This is particularly the case when an art centre only has one full-time staff member. Overall, it must be recognised that efficient management of the commercial operations of an art centre is critical to the centre's sustainability. Any expansion in commercial activities outside of the core operations need to be supported by additional human and financial resources.

The involvement of Government departments and agencies in facilitating business opportunities for Indigenous Australians

Because there are strong interconnections between sectors in remote Indigenous communities, boosting one or more of the sectors has the potential to contribute to the growth and increased activities of the local economy overall.⁹ That is why government support and services are so important in economic development of these areas.

It is important to note that the hybridity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations operating remotely allows for overlapping and sharing of services between organisations.¹⁰ Funding

⁸ https://www.countryneedspeople.org.au/boosting_economy

⁹ For example, a successful tourism enterprise could stimulate local production of visual and performing arts, as well as perhaps film and multimedia works. These activities could in turn have flow-on effects into cultural archiving, jobs in arts management and administration, sale of local art materials, or other impacts. A further example might be a language and learning centre, which could be supported with additional government funding for a language-reviving project or for cultural archiving services; this could then lead to the centre taking on some publishing house functions and perhaps create opportunities for local Indigenous writers, storytellers and illustrators.

¹⁰ This happens in a variety of ways, including: when tourist operations cooperate and rely on services provided by art centres or rangers; when art centres rely on the stream of tourists being brought in by those tourist operators; when artists cooperate with rangers for collecting materials on country; when organisations or groups in a community rely on the services of a local multimedia centre for documentation of events and

support that targets multiple organisations, such as Indigenous tourism operators, art centres, ranger organisations and so on, could be effective.

An important avenue towards expanding economic opportunities for individual artists and cultural producers in remote areas lies in developing the distribution and marketing components of the value chain. To a large extent market development takes place in response to commercial incentives, but there is a place for more government support through expert advice, information and services – for example through provision of market intelligence, export promotion programs, support for fairs and festivals, and so on. In a commercial context, events such as the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair are important channels for sales of creative output from remote communities.

Another area where market intervention is appropriate is in the matter of ethically-sourced Indigenous art. Art centres and many galleries act responsibly in providing certificates of authenticity for works they sell, but further progress is needed in regulatory measures to prevent the sale of fake Indigenous art products of every sort, and to promote best practice in the certification of authenticity by all sellers of products purporting to come from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. Improvement in such measures will not only enhance the capability of these artists to assert their economic and moral rights, they would also give buyers added confidence in the functioning of the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art market, with consequent positive effects on demand.

promotional material; when dancers and musicians benefit from using vacant spaces provided by a local school for rehearsals; or when artists are able to earn some income from participating in culture programs run by a school.