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Our Ref: 2017/549720

Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Madam / Sir,

**House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs Inquiry into
the Proliferation of Inauthentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 'Style' Art
(FAKE ART)**

The sale of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and crafts represents big business to a burgeoning sector nationally and internationally.

Sydney is a main gateway for tourism in Australia. In 2016 there were 12.3 million international and domestic cultural and heritage visitors to New South Wales, 62% of international cultural and heritage travellers in Australia (Destination NSW Cultural and Heritage Tourism Snapshot 2016).

In the year ending September 2016, visitors to New South Wales who engaged in an Aboriginal experiences spent a total of \$1.141 billion during their time in the State. A total of 394,000 domestic and international visitors participated in an Aboriginal cultural tourism experience in New South Wales, an increase of 50 per cent on the previous year (Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan, Destination NSW 2016).

The sale of inauthentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander products represents an international reputational risk to Australia and undermines the capacity for reputable producers and dealers to establish market share with their authentic products and services. It undermines the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to economic prosperity through practicing culture.

Fake Indigenous art also suffocates the opportunity for Aboriginal communities that have been impacted heavily by colonisation to re-establish their cultural identity and cultural expression within these high traffic gateways to Australia.

The City has worked extensively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in developing our Eora Journey Economic Development Plan and have identified the need to explore initiatives that respond to the impact of non-authentic and unethical products and services. Concern about the extent and impact of unethical trade of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture including fake art, was raised consistently during the consultation process.

The City has identified four main themes in our Eora Journey Economic Development Plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prosperity based on challenges identified in our engagement and research work.

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Theme four of the Eora Journey Economic Development Plan sets out action items for growing key sectors of the economy including tourism by 'strengthening competitiveness and growing Indigenous owned and operated cultural experiences' and 'growing opportunities and promoting ethical practices in the retail sector.'

(cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/business/business-support/business-in-your-sector/cross-sector-themes/aboriginal-employment-enterprise)

The City of Sydney and surrounding councils have experienced unethical operators attempting to use venues to sell inauthentic artworks and artefacts. Unscrupulous operators use a range of techniques such as changing their business name and shopping around for venues from different councils to continue their business of selling fake art to unsuspecting buyers. A national approach is required to restrict the way unethical suppliers trade in different locations and online.

The City collaborated with surrounding councils to produce an event in 2015 called Starting the Conversation: Ethical Trade in Indigenous Art. This forum discussed important issues surrounding the buying and selling of Australian Indigenous art with expert panellists from around the country.

Some of the options discussed to address this problem are:

- Create a buyer beware strategy
- Promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and operated businesses
- Leverage existing business networks to extend awareness and discussion
- Work with key stakeholders and peak bodies including Indigenous Art Code, Artists in the Black (Arts Law Centre of Australia), and Viscopy Copyright Agency.

The City supports the need for a coordinated national approach to address the problems of the unethical trade of Indigenous art, fake art and exploitation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture within the tourist sector and is committed to the vision and guiding principles of our Eora Journey Economic Development Plan for sustained prosperity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Sydney.

Yours sincerely,



Monica Barone
Chief Executive Officer