

## **CAIRNS INDIGENOUS ART FAIR –**

### **Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry – Growing presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ‘style’ art and craft products and merchandise for sale across Australia.**

CIAF celebrates and strengthens the contemporary Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultural industry. CIAF’s centrepiece is a three day dynamic art fair – a gateway for artistic, social, and economic exchange and opportunity for Queensland Indigenous art and culture. Much more than an art fair, CIAF includes traditional and contemporary elements of performance: music, song and dance; theatre and fashion; workshops and informative talks. It provides a sophisticated environment to attract and nurture national and international recognition and the appreciation of the vital cultural contribution of QLD First Nation peoples, while offering an ethical marketplace for the sale and purchase of Indigenous art.

CIAF is a public interface for Indigenous artists from around the state, providing an opportunity to extend their skills, promote their culture, and sell art work in an ethical environment. The event offers participants and visitors a celebratory and authentic experience of Indigenous cultural exchange, presenting an integral element of life in Queensland.

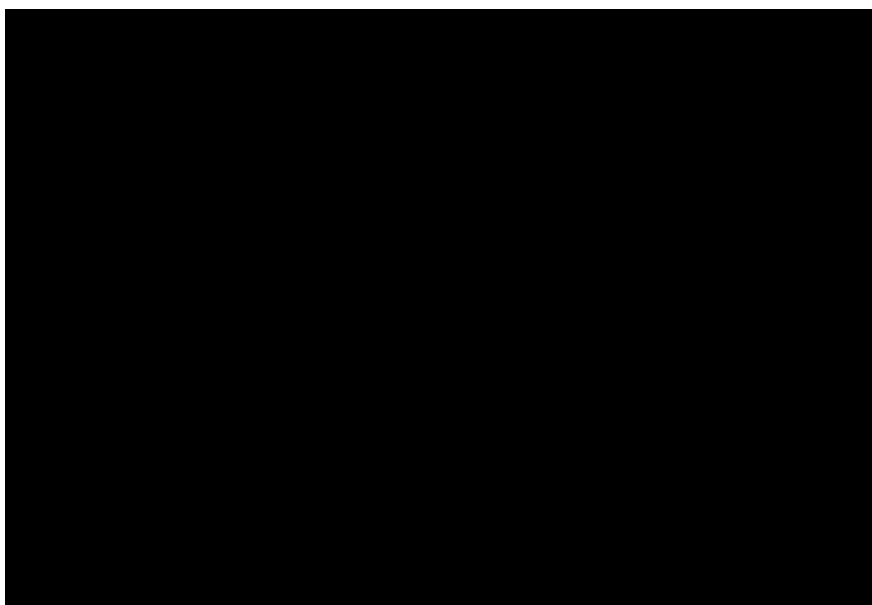
CIAF has expanded from its beginnings as a high-end visual arts market into an exceptional cultural and multi-art form experience. Established core events such as the Art Fair and satellite programs will feature as mainstays of the CIAF experience. In addition new and evolving events will continue to ensure CIAF remains Australia’s Premier Indigenous Art Fair, highlighted by the Fashion Performance, Art Market, CIAF Conversations, Entertainment Program, Blak Release (film) and inclusion of the Gimuy Fish Festival into the program.

This evolving look will continue with a proposed variation in performance events, curated art exhibitions in satellite galleries, new artistic mediums and the inclusion of new CIAF programmed events at Umi Arts, the Tanks Arts Centre, CoCA and other Cairns venues, will deliver new elements to draw audiences.

The CIAF team will continue to work closely with established funding partners and sponsors including Federal and State government agencies, while building the economic future of CIAF through diversified income streams and new approaches to sponsorship.

The sales success of this event since its inception is undeniable, with more than 5 million dollars generated over six years, indicating that this is a working template for ongoing economic benefits. Art works purchased at CIAF are held in collections in major institutions country-wide and internationally in Europe, North America, Britain and New Zealand.

*Gail Mabo, Artist - "I find coming here to CIAF I get to see the best of the best. We are an untouched pearl and we are showing the world our best. So let those people who come from overseas enjoy our art and have a great time with us"*



### **STRATEGIC VISION FOR CAPACITY BUILDING & ETHICAL SALES**

CIAF focuses on four inter-related opportunities: partnering for development pathways for Queensland Indigenous artists; the showcase and sale of Indigenous art through an ethical marketplace; increased leverage of existing markets and development of new markets for Queensland Indigenous art; and the building of national and international First Nations connections and exchange.

CIAF recognises that capacity building and pathway development for Queensland Indigenous artists is critical to its success and the financial future of artists. From emerging

through to established professional artists, the refreshed program is designed as an ‘artist’s journey’ of opportunities including an annual awards program at the CIAF Art Fair, annual commissioning program with different art centres each year and development of an annual Symposium.

History shows that CIAF actively cultivates return buyers because they see the Fair as a ‘must attend event’ to see and purchase high quality work in an authentic environment. Funding will support CIAF in continuing to build a national and international platform through the highly successful Collectors and Curators Program that celebrates Indigenous art and culture in an environment that is conducive to doing business and will develop a VIP program from 2017 for thought leaders and influencers who do not fit into the Collectors and Curators criteria.

The active inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is central to the CIAF governance model, the development of the CIAF program, and new strategic initiatives.



### **THE ART FAIR & ART MARKET**

The Art Fair is designed to exhibit ‘high end’ visual art created by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists with cultural connections to Queensland. CIAF is dedicated to generating sales and raising artist’s profiles. The Art Fair is committed to an ethical point of sale and works under the Indigenous Art Code. CIAF believes that Queensland Indigenous artists, art centres, galleries and buyers will benefit from a healthy marketplace that is committed to best industry practice and fair dealing.

The primary focus of the CIAF Art Market is to increase sales for Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and designers. CIAF believes that Queensland Indigenous artists, designers, art centres, local galleries and buyers will benefit from a healthy marketplace that is committed to best industry practice and fair dealing

## **CULTURAL PROTOCOLS**

CIAF is committed to promoting ethical practice in the sale of authentic Indigenous art products by Queensland artists, designers, art centres and local galleries.

CIAF upholds cultural protocols and does not approve of products for sale or display that present reproduced styles or creation beings without “proper” cultural permission.

If artwork is presented as following “traditional” styles, it should be culturally authentic to the artist. Artists must show a cultural connection or belonging to the designs and stories. CIAF in consultation with the relevant Traditional Custodians will remove ceremonial objects for sale on display that may offend other Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander groups.

## **CONCLUSION**

Although CIAF has policies to ensure the protection of artists and arts workers in art and cultural protocols, we feel there needs to be a Federal legislation that ensures national protection of Indigenous cultural knowledge and expression.

Further ATSI people need to have a local opportunity to control this that is driven from a national level – i.e. Similar to the Indigenous Rangers/Working on country programs, local artists and arts workers could be tasked with ensuring the authenticity of art and cultural materials in their region, pertinent to their cultural lore. Provision of a National ‘trademark’ that authenticates items and is easily recognisable (similar to the Woolmark/Made in Australia brands) could be developed to protect both artists and purchaser.

This important opportunity to empower artists and cultural advocates provides a much needed interface between the creators of the work and the vendor – enabling control from the ground up.

