



PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

Submission 132.1

The content of this submission is in video format
please click on the link to view

[https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/
House/Indigenous_Affairs/The_growing_presence_of_inauthen
tic_Aboriginal_and_Torres_Strait_Islander_style_art_and_craft/
Videos.](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Indigenous_Affairs/The_growing_presence_of_inauthentic_Aboriginal_and_Torres_Strait_Islander_style_art_and_craft/Videos)

Djambawa Marawili: Just a little message to those people who are representing blackfellas—those government people who are representing blackfellas—we are giving you a little bit of a clue just to let you know how can you support us or to tell those people who are doing art about Aboriginal people. They are making copycat, or doing that art and pretend they are from blackfellas. It's our industry. We always want to keep those ones in our hands. Like everybody in Australia and everybody in the world, we are wanting some money and wanting to survive. Can they leave those equipments for us to survive or those patterns and designs and stories instead of taking away and give us an opportunity so we can survive with those patterns and designs. Please, if you are representing for us—the Indigenous government people who are really representing for us—can you do something for us to stop these sort of things?

Gabriel Nodea: Those arts and crafts what we do, we didn't make them up. That's been handed down from generation to generation, going back to our essential spirits. They didn't create all that blow-in. Not only all that but you can break a rule, too; there are consequences if we break the rules. We are not allowed to go another man's country, take away another man's things. In this case, fake art is copycat—other man's things. That thing blow in. He go for a very wrong, wrong trouble—he snatches everything. We never make it up today. He lays out our belongings—we really own that thing—and stealing from us and copying all our things. They make a lot of money out of it. It's no good—bad practice. And make me feel worse inside.

We write letter to our government. Our government help us—could have stopped these things once for all—all for one. It's no good.

Michelle Woody: When I'm looking at fake art, it's really sad that it's not really like Aboriginal or Indigenous people's or Tiwi. Tiwi art is important and unique. We want to keep it strong and keep it alive.

Jangu Nundhirribala: I've heard about that fake art. They are breaking our laws, and this is not really good. Breaking our laws and being steal away from us in Australia when they are coming, those faking people, they don't really realise that they are belonging to Aboriginal, which mean to us they're taking it away from us. We can recognise with them and say that 'It's ours, that one,' and we feel sad about it, 'cos something not really right—they're taking it and we feel hurt.

Jedda Puruntatameri: It's not only for my painting and it represents me. And only my grandchildren and my children can paint that story. It tells about people travelling to a ceremony, funerals. When you look at the cross, that's the rivers. We are connected one way or another. Because it's not your drawings, not your land. And it comes from the heart.

My father taught me how to paint and to tell stories that we are connected with the land, the sea. We're also custodians of the land, caretakers, and so we look after the land. So when we go travelling we look at family's landmarks, songs that we are connected to.

Maxine Charlie: Could you please stop them from importing Aboriginal fake arts in Australia. We need to support our own Aboriginal artists in Australia. Thank you.

Donna Nadjamerrek: I am very sorry about what fake art doing to my people of Australia. We need to protect our important heritage and what it means to my people, mainly the artists. That is very important for them to continue doing that teaching there for families selling things in their own art centre, which makes our artwork to be protected. It's very important that we need to stop this happening. It's our heritage that we like to keep, keeping it in our hands, because it's connected to our land, sea, plant. Because a lot of the artwork they do it's got connection with their painting. So we want your support. Please help us to protect this.

Tom E Lewis: Fake art's been around for a long time but here in this country we're responsible for cultural campfires. And the art comes from my family and people, and I can't fake art from another community. It'll cause us trouble. If I do that, I'd get punished by family and people from those places we call countries. You're actually discriminating on us and you're making us look as though we can't do and manage our own stuff. Who do we turn to?

I give you an example. I got off the plane in Schiphol in Amsterdam and I had my instruments, my didgeridoos. On the same flight, a guy got on in Bali and he had about 12 bags of fake art on didgeridoos—a huge bag of about 20 of them, all sold at 175 pounds each, which he obviously took to England. You know what, it's the first time I felt helpless, because I have no law to give me strength to protect what's ours.

**ANKA Submission,
to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs:**

**Inquiry into the Growing Presence of Inauthentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 'style' Art and Craft
Products and Merchandise for Sale Across Australia**

APPENDIX A

**TRANSCRIPT - ANKA BOARD OF DIRECTORS RESPONSE TO
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES INQUIRY**

This is a transcript of statements by the ANKA Board of Directors in their video submission:

<https://vimeo.com/242697202>

*(ANKA acknowledges the work of Loma Martin and John Saunders
in filming and post-production of the video submission)*

**DJAMBAWA MARAWILI AM, ANKA CHAIRPERSON (ARNHEM LAND REGION).
Chair, Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Art Centre & Head, Yilpara Homeland Studio.**

Transcript-Aboriginal English:

Just a little message to people who are representing blackfella; and those government people who are representing blackfella. We are giving you a little bit of a clue; just to let you know, how can you support us. Or to tell, those people who are doing art, about Aborigines people, they are doing *gammon* [deceitful nonsense, fake, pretence] or making *copy-cat*, doing some art and pretending they are from blackfella. It is our industry, like we always want to keep those ones in our hands. Like everybody in Australia and everybody in the world, we are wanting some money, and wanting to survive with money, but you know; can they leave those equipment for us to survive with those patterns and designs and stories, instead of taking them away. And give us some opportunity we can survive, with those patterns designs and objects. Please; if you are representing for us Indigenous government people, if you are really representing for us; can you do something for us, to stop these sorts of things.

English translation:

Just a little message to those people, especially government officials, who are representing blackfellas in this matter. We want to give you a little bit of a clue [from *our perspective as traditional Aboriginal people*]; to let you know, how you can support us. How you can tell those people who are doing art about Aborigines people, which is *Gammon* (deceitful nonsense, fake, pretence), or making *Copy-Cat*, making art and pretending its made by blackfellas, that it is our industry. We want to keep it in our own hands.

Like everybody in Australia, and everybody in the world, we are wanting some money, and wanting to survive with money [*as is necessary in the contemporary world*]. But they should leave that equipment [*those tools patterns and designs and stories*], for us to survive with, instead of taking them away. And give us some opportunity we can survive with - those patterns designs and objects. Please, if you government people are representing us, if you are really representing for us; can you do something for us, to stop these sort of things.

GABRIEL NODEA, ANKA DEPUTY CHAIR (KIMBERLEY REGION).
Chair, Warmun Art Centre.

Transcript – Aboriginal English:

All them arts and crafts what we do we didn't make all that up. You know? That's been handed down from generation to generation going back to our ancestors' spirit people create all that before blow in. And not only all that, if you break the rules there are consequences. Your not allowed to go to another man's country, and take away another man's thing. In this case fake art copy cat other man's thing. That thing blow in. We go back long, long time ago. We never make it up today. Like our, like our belonging. We really own that thing and people steal 'em from us and copy all our things and make a lot of money out of it. No good. Bad practice. Makes me feel hurt inside. We write letter to our government. Our government help us put a stop to these things One for all. All for one. No good.

English Translation:

Aboriginal people don't just make up the arts and crafts [stories, designs, patterns, dance]. It has been handed down from generation to generation. There are also rules associated with our art and if you break those rules there are consequences. We are not allowed to go to another man's country and take another man's thing. This is our belonging. In this case fake art is taking another man's thing. The art (stories and designs) belong to us and people steal them from us and then make a lot of money out of it. This makes me feel hurt and our Government needs to put a stop to this practice.

MICHELLE WOODY, ANKA DIRECTOR (TIWI REGION).
Chair, Jilamara Arts.

Transcript – Aboriginal English:

When I am looking at fake art it's really sad that it's not really like Aboriginal people like Indigenous people. At Tiwi, at Tiwi art, it's really important we want to keep it strong and keep it alive.

English Translation:

When I look at Fake Art it makes me sad. Tiwi Art (and culture) is really important, and we want to keep it strong and alive.

JANGU NUNDHIRIBALA, ANKA SECRETARY (DARWIN KATHERINE REGION).
Numburindi Arts.

Transcript – Aboriginal English:

I have heard about that Fake Art. They are breaking our laws. And this is not really good breaking our laws and then steal away from us. In Australia when they come in; some fake people, they don't really realise that they [the design] are belonging to Aborigine people. It means to us they are taking it away from us . We can recognise it and say that it is ours, that one and we feel sad about it because something is not really right. They are taking it and we feel hurt.

English Translation:

I have heard about that Fake Art. The people who produce Fake Art are breaking our laws. They should not break our cultural law as it demeans the importance of the cultural laws. In Australia people come and steal the designs from us. They belong to us (Aboriginal people). We can recognise what is ours and they are taking it away from us. We feel hurt and sad. It really affects us deeply.

JEDDA PURUNTATAMERI, ANKA DIRECTOR (TIWI REGION).
Munupi Arts and Craft.

Transcript – Aboriginal English:

It's my story my painting and it represents me. And only my grandchildren, my children can paint that story. It tells about people travelling to a ceremony, funerals. When you look at the cross, at the rivers, we are connected one way or another. Because it is not your story not your clan and it comes from the heart. My father taught me how to paint and to tell stories that we are connected with, the land, the sea. We are also custodians of the land, caretakers, so we look after the land so when we go travelling we look at landmarks, songs that we are connected to.

English Translation:

This painting represents me [my family]. Only my grandchildren and children can paint it [the design that represents the story]. It tells about people travelling to ceremony and funerals. When you look at it you can see it connects us. It is not your story or clan and it comes from the heart. My father taught me how to paint and tell stories that show that we are connected with the land and the sea. We are the custodians of the land and we look after the land so when we go travelling we look at the land, the landmarks and know the songs that connect us to that land.

MAXINE CHARLIE, ANKA DIRECTOR (KIMBERLEY REGION).
Director, Nagula Jarndu Design.

Transcript – Aboriginal English:

Could you please stop from them importing Aboriginal art in [into] Australia. We need to support our own Aboriginal artists in Australia. Thank you.

DONNA NADJAMERREK, ANKA DIRECTOR (ARNHEM LAND).
Chair, Injalak Arts.

Transcript – Aboriginal English:

I [am] very sorry about what fake art doing to my people of Australia. We need to protect what's our important heritage means to my people, mainly the artists. And that it is very important for them to continue doing that by teaching their own families or selling things in their own Art Centre. Which [the Art Centre] makes our artwork to be protected. It's very important that we need to stop this happening. It's our heritage, that we like to keep it in our hands, because its connected to our land, to our sea, and plants. Because a lot of the artwork they do, it has connection with their painting [culture]. So we want your support please. Help us protect this.

English Translation:

I am very sorry about the way that Fake Art affects my people. We need to protect our heritage and what belongs to our people. It is very important that people can continue to practise their culture and they can do this by teaching their families and selling genuine Aboriginal Art in their own Art Centres.

The Art Centres enable our art to be protected. We have to keep representations [art] of our cultural knowledge in our own hands as our art is connected to the land, the sea and plants. Please support us and help protect what we have.

TOM E LEWIS, ANKA DIRECTOR, (DARWIN KATHERINE REGION)
Chair, Djilpin Arts and Ghunmarin Culture Centre

Transcript – Aboriginal English:

Fake Art has been around a long time. But here in this country we are responsible for cultural camp fires. And the art comes from my family and people, and I can't fake art from another community. It will cause us trouble. And if I do that, I will get punished by those family and people from the places we call countries. You are actually discriminating on us, and you are making us look as though we can't do and manage our own stuff. Who do we turn to ?

I will give you an example. I got off the plane in Sippo, in Amsterdam, and I had my instruments, my didgeridoos; and on the same flight a guy got on from Bali, and he had about 12 bags of fake art on didgeridoos. A huge bag with about 20 of them, all sold at 175 pounds each, which he took to England. And you know what? That's the first time that I have felt helpless. Because I no law to give me strength to protect what's ours.

English Translation:

Fake Art has been around a long time in this country creating cultural camp fires. Art comes from my family and people and I can't fake art from another community. If I do that I will be punished by family and people from the places, we call our country. You are actually discriminating against us (by not helping us protect our culture) and it makes us look as though we cannot manage our own culture. [As it is not protected]. Who do we turn to?

An example: I got off the plane in Sippo, in Amsterdam, and I had my instruments, my didgeridoos. On the same flight a man got on in Bali with 12 bags of Fake Aboriginal Art on didgeridoos. A huge bag with about 20 of them all sold for 175 pounds each, which he took to England. And you know what ? That is the first time that I have felt helpless. Because I had no law to give me strength to protect what's ours.