

ANKAAA

Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists

Working together to keep art, country and culture strong

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Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia
The Development of Northern Australia
Inquiry Submission
E: jscna@aph.gov.au
Deadline: 17 February 2014

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RE: ANKAAA submission to the inquiry on the development of Northern Australia

ANKAAA welcomes the Australian Parliament's Northern Australia Committee launch of an inquiry into the development of Northern Australia. Australia's North has much to offer not only as the gateway to the economies of Asia but also as a gateway to a rich and colourful mosaic of Indigenous art and culture.

ANKAAA is the peak advocacy and support agency for Aboriginal artists working individually and through 49 remote Art Centres located in the Top End of the Northern Territory and the Kimberley in Western Australia. Its mission is to keep art, culture and country strong together. ANKAAA supports around 5000 artists, many of whom are internationally acclaimed and important community leaders. ANKAAA is led by a strong Indigenous Board and has strong relationships with national and regional government, community and industry partners. ANKAAA supports artistic excellence, facilitates access to economic opportunities for artists, and fosters the long-term sustainability of the Indigenous arts industry through providing core services in the areas of training, resourcing and supporting, referral and networking, advocacy and lobbying as well as marketing and promotion.

ANKAAA welcomes the Committee's focus on the potential for development of the region's tourism industries as one of its priority areas, and would like to raise the Committee's awareness of the potential of the Indigenous arts industry in the Top End. The Indigenous arts industry offers real and meaningful job opportunities for Indigenous people in community Art Centres and broader arts enterprises across remote parts of the NT and WA. The arts have had a significantly positive impact on the lives and self esteem of Indigenous artists and arts workers since the 1970s.

ANKAAA would like the Committee to consider the following points in its inquiry:

- Indigenous art and culture is unique to Australia and has proven to be of high export value overseas. It is gaining increasing interest in Asia in particular.
- Indigenous art creates real and meaningful employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians in communities.
- Indigenous cultural tourism is a niche market that remains largely untapped.
- Engaging in art and cultural activities has improved the lives and well-being of Indigenous

Australians.

- 'Cultural diplomacy' has the power to forge strong international relationships that can benefit Australia's social, economic and political aspirations.
- Darwin as the centre of the Top End could be promoted as a unique tropical and diverse cultural hub. The establishment of a dedicated cultural centre with world-class facilities would enable the growth of the cultural and creative industries in the Top End.
- The example of Western Australia shows that investment in arts and culture contributes to the accrual of social and cultural capital, which attracts a skilled workforce and international visitors and contributes to the economy.

Please do not hesitate to contact ANKAAA for further discussion on any of the above points.

Christina Davidson
CEO, ANKAAA



ANKAAA AGM / Annual Conference at Mount Bundy Station, NT, November 2013