

## **Inquiry into the Indigenous visual arts and craft sector Submission by Ananguku Arts & Culture Aboriginal Corporation**

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Ananguku Arts & Culture Aboriginal Corporation is a not-for-profit body representing the artists of Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands in the far north-west of South Australia. It was founded in 1997 (incorporated in 2002) and has as its members approximately 400 residents of the region's ten major communities and many homelands. It is governed by an Executive Committee elected by the membership. Its principal role is supporting the development of contemporary arts practice as a means of providing economic, social, cultural and community benefit to its members and – indirectly – their families and communities. While individual art centres in APY Lands are formally represented by Desert Inc, the Corporation also represents the interests of those centres' artists (and artists not working within art centres) on a distinct regional basis.

Corporation members are resident in the following communities:

- Ernabella (location of Ernabella Arts Inc art centre)
- Fregon (Kaltjiti Arts)
- Amata (Tjala Arts)
- Indulkana (Iwantja Arts & Crafts)
- Mimili (Mimili Maku Arts & Crafts)
- Kalka and Pipalyatjara (Ninuku Arts)
- Nyapari, Kanpi and Watarru (Tjungu Palya Arts)

Members also come from the following homelands and in many cases work outside the art centre network:

- Kenmore Park
- Watinuma
- Railway Bore
- Turkey Bore
- Irintata

The Corporation is also assisting emerging and established community-based Indigenous artists in other South Australian non-metropolitan communities through a mentoring initiative known as the Statewide Indigenous Community Arts Development (SICAD) project. As a result, the Corporation has a good knowledge of the state of the Indigenous arts and crafts sector throughout regional South Australia.

Communities and regions assisted by the SICAD Project (with assistance from the Government of SA through Arts SA and Country Arts SA, and the Australian Government through the Regional Arts Fund and the Australia Council) include:

- Port Lincoln

- Ceduna
- Scotdesco
- Yalata
- Koonibba
- Oak Valley
- Port Augusta
- Point Pearce
- Flinders Ranges
- Coober Pedy
- Oodnadatta
- The Riverland
- Mount Gambier

Note that a SICAD-specific submission appears as Attachment A to this document.

The Corporation works to a Strategic Business Plan developed and agreed by members. Principal objectives may be summarised as being:

- To provide enhanced economic opportunity for artists through the making and selling of art.
- To increase the viability and sustainability of arts practice.
- To secure appropriate resources for the development of viable and sustainable arts practice.
- To provide increased arts practice opportunities for young people and men.
- To use contemporary arts practice as a means for effecting intergenerational cultural knowledge transfer and maintaining and extending cultural knowledge.
- To support the development of skills, experience and opportunities necessary for Indigenous people to direct and manage their arts practice and enterprise.
- To develop and provide services, practices and procedures that support effective arts-based economic and cultural development towards the creation of more sustainable and independent communities.

### **Submission**

This submission does not seek to provide a comprehensive, national response to the terms of reference. Rather, it presents information relevant to the Corporation's geographic area of concern with occasional references to the broader context.

The submission has been prepared by the Corporation's chief executive and is based on information and opinion garnered from members, the Executive Committee and colleagues over a number of years, as well as the author's direct experience of the Indigenous arts sector.

(a) the current size and scale of Australia's Indigenous visual arts and craft sector;

The size and scale of the sector are not easily reckoned, with there being little reliable data collected by any agency or organisation on a regular basis. Such reckoning also requires definition of the sector to either include or exclude secondary sales of Indigenous art and craft (for example), to include or exclude art and craft generated as part of CDEP activities, to include or exclude the making and sale of traditional artefacts and so on.

In South Australia, it is estimated that there are between 800 and 1500 Indigenous artists (excluding artefact makers) earning at least \$1,000 per annum directly from the sale of their

work. A large proportion of these artists are based in APY Lands but there is significant distribution of active artists throughout regional and remote parts of the State. It is estimated that a further 1,000 to 2,000 earn at least \$500 per annum from the sale of artefacts they make.

In APY Lands, there are approximately 400 artists who engage regularly in visual arts practice as a means of generating earned income. Perhaps 50 of these artists earn more than \$10,000 per annum from that practice. A further 100 to 200 engage in arts practice on an occasional basis.

The net value of art sales through all art centres in APY Lands is in the range \$1.3-\$1.5 million per annum, with current annual growth of an estimated 30%. Craft sales are estimated to be around \$400,000 per annum for the region.

The sector is considered to be growing. From a production point of view: three new art centres have opened in APY Lands in the past two years, with 120 “new” artists being served; and the output of existing art centres is growing at an average rate of at least 25%. From a market point of view: it appears that demand for higher quality art and craft continues to outstrip supply; there continues to be a steady increase in the number of galleries and dealers trading in Aboriginal art; and pricing appears yet to reach any significant barriers.

(b) the economic, social and cultural benefits of the sector;

The nature and scale of these benefits have been discussed well in myriad materials available to the Inquiry. This submission seeks to emphasise two points:

€ that Indigenous “art” is perhaps the prime contemporary medium for senior people to explore, document and share often profound cultural knowledge (of creation, country and family) and as such offers not just reinforcement of that knowledge but also a very significant guard against its loss through non-transmission to younger generations. There are risks inherent in regarding Indigenous art as an industry. (In a world driven by merchandising, it may be useful to view cultural knowledge as the creative “asset” and the art as the “merchandise”. While the latter – the “industry” – reinforces the value of the former, without the former the latter has no value.) With this in mind, the Inquiry should be mindful of the intangible value of Indigenous art and craft in preserving irreplaceable cultural knowledge.

€ that contemporary arts practice, in providing meaningful activity not otherwise available through limited employment and so on, offers considerable (though unquantifiable) savings in health care, justice, policing and so on.

(c) the overall financial, cultural and artistic sustainability of the sector;

It is the writer’s belief that the sector has the potential to be sustainable in these areas, provided appropriate development support is given.

(d) the current and likely future priority infrastructure needs of the sector;

The principal priority for infrastructure is capital for buildings and/or building maintenance and improvements: both for art centres and staff housing. Growth in the sector is limited more by this factor than any other, particularly as neither State nor Commonwealth funding programs appear to favour capital investment at this stage. The majority of art centre buildings in APY Lands are sub-standard and inappropriate for artists’ needs and for occupational health and safety. In particular, objectives of engaging men in art practice cannot

be met where the sharing of (already inadequate) work space with women is culturally unacceptable. In three of the seven communities in which APY art centres are based, there is no permanent housing available for art centre staff. This puts all three of those invaluable projects at serious risk.

- (e) opportunities for strategies and mechanisms that the sector could adopt to improve its practices, capacity and sustainability, including to deal with unscrupulous or unethical conduct;

(No evidence tendered.)

- (f) opportunities for existing government support programs for Indigenous visual arts and crafts to be more effectively targeted to improve the sector's capacity and future sustainability; and

It is felt very strongly that current levels of funding available through DCITA programs (notably NACISS) are vastly inadequate, not just to existing need but to new demand. Annual funding provides a further penalty and the Inquiry is urged to consider the merits of triennial funding through the NACISS and other programs.

It is felt equally strongly that there is merit in other government agencies accepting a role in funding art centres in recognition of their value as community enterprises and their multi-faceted roles that extend beyond the making and selling of art (refuges, citizens' advice bureaux, transaction centres, community archives, training centres etc).

NACISS guidelines should be reviewed to encompass objectives other than the strictly commercial.

- (g) future opportunities for further growth of Australia's Indigenous visual arts and craft sector, including through further developing international markets.

(No evidence tendered.)

Colin Koch  
General Manager  
27 November 2006

## ATTACHMENT A

### ***SICAD Project***

*Submission to Inquiry into Australia's Indigenous  
Visual Arts & Crafts Sector 2006*

#### **Feedback from SICAD meeting 21<sup>st</sup> November 2006**

On 21.11.06 a meeting was convened by Ananguku Arts at Arts SA in Adelaide for representatives of regional and rural artists and arts organisations/projects from around South Australia. The Senate Inquiry was discussed and the terms of reference distributed to participants.

The following artists represented organisations, communities and regions and formulated the following responses to be conveyed to the Inquiry:

Inawinytji Williamson  
Farrin Miller  
Joseph Cattermole  
Quentin  
Kirsty Miller  
Regina McKenzie  
Tania Benbolt  
Desley Gray  
Amanda Franklin  
Sandra Taylor  
Mary Brennan  
Charmaine Wilson  
Isabelle Taylor  
Trevor James

Kaltjiti Arts/ Fregon  
Point Pearce  
Point Pearce  
Point Pearce  
Scotdesco  
Hawker/Flinders Ranges  
Ceduna Aboriginal Arts & Culture  
Koonibba  
Kuju Arts, Port Lincoln  
Coober Pedy  
Mt Gambier  
Port Augusta  
Port Augusta  
Riverland

#### **The importance of Indigenous art centres and dedicated arts projects**

- Having art centres/projects encourages the growth of art practice for Aboriginal people. Rural communities in SA with Indigenous populations have many people who would or could practice art but have had no access to: workshops; materials; skills development; encouragement; or support. It's Catch 22 for communities/towns – without a functioning art centre it is hard to prove or demonstrate the need for an art centre, but many Aboriginal people will not begin making art until they have the space or opportunity which an art centre provides.
- Applying for funding for art centres is difficult (lots of paperwork) and generally needs to be done by an advocate/supporter.
- Many artists who wish to form an art centre rely on auspice/host bodies to apply for funding on their behalf until they are separately incorporated – a process that can take a long time for a group of artists. A recent incident highlighted the problems encountered. A group of artists in the Flinders Ranges have held three extremely successful exhibitions in a tourist destination in their region in the last 2 years. Each time larger numbers of artists have participated, demonstrating the groundswell effect. The resource body that has hosted small grants for the exhibitions was encouraged to apply for funding for the 2007

year by the Australia Council for arts development. Staff in the host body decided not to apply for the funding because their own funding status was uncertain and at the time of close of applications (early November) had not been notified whether the host body's funding was to continue beyond December 31<sup>st</sup>. It was only after the closing date for Ozco funding that another six months funding was confirmed. The project has therefore lost an incredibly important opportunity.

- Government departments are constantly warning that there is minimal funding for 'new art centres' because funding is already committed to existing centres.
- Given the growth and extraordinary success of Aboriginal art practice around Australia, the sector desperately needs increased funds for the support of new art centres/projects.
- The delegates believed that all communities with Indigenous populations have the right to have art centres and/or access to places where they can make and promote art, because it will stimulate art practice, and will provide social, cultural and economic opportunities for people.

### **Individual artists**

- At present many artists in the regions in SA are working alone. They are either living in places where they do not have access to an art centre or the arts projects operating in their regions are CDEP projects and have a number of restrictions for participants and/or are directed/controlled by non-Indigenous managers. At present there is very little support available for individuals for:
  - capital (workshops, materials) and/or
  - arts practice workshops, skills development etc (except through the SICAD project which has only been operating for 12 months and has no guaranteed funding in 2007).
- Many individual artists are not in a position to prepare submissions for funding on their own behalf and need support and assistance in identifying opportunities and applying for funding.
- Many individual artists live in locations where they do not have any or easy access to arts workers/officers (such as Country Arts SA staff), for example: Oak Valley, Yalata, Koonibba, Oodnadatta, Coober Pedy, the Coorong, Ceduna, and Kingston.
- In the last year the SICAD Project Coordinator has been endeavoring to provide on-site support to individual artists and arts projects in more than 15 remote and rural locations around the entire State and this is the first time such support has been delivered systematically and over such a broad geographical spread.

### **CDEP**

- CDEP is highly problematic and although it has provided benefits to artists in remote areas it has not been working effectively in many situations.
- In many cases CDEP has been better than nothing – because for remote and rural artists nothing has been the only alternative.
- CDEP has been valuable because it provides a workshop space for artists (for example in Mt Gambier, Ceduna, Port Lincoln, Coober Pedy, Port Augusta).
- CDEP also provides some funds for art materials – which many artists find prohibitively expensive.
- CDEP has allowed some participants opportunities to try a range of media.
- CDEP funds a supervisor's position and sometimes organises activities that other artists can participate in.

- Some CDEPs operate retail outlets and take artworks from independent artists on consignment and are both flexible and supportive – a valuable marketing and promotion opportunity for individual artists (for example, Ceduna, Kuju Arts in Port Lincoln and Mt Gambier).
- There are not consistent rules/agreements for payment of artists working as CDEP participants across the State. Each CDEP operates with its own rules and with varying degrees of consultation with participants. Some participants get a percentage of the sale price of the artwork in addition to CDEP wages. Some receive only the CDEP wages.
- Some CDEP projects in SA are managed with virtually no input or direction from CDEP participants or supervisors. Many artists in such projects feel alienated, unhappy and frustrated. Decisions are made at board or management levels without any consultation and there is no avenue for grievances for fear of retribution. One particular CDEP project that operates in a number of locations is especially problematic.
- The recent changes to CDEP in relation to ‘putting participants through CDEP’ and limiting length of participation are nonsensical. There are few salaried employment opportunities for artists – most will be self employed if they leave CDEP and average income statistics for artists (Indigenous and/or non-Indigenous) are notoriously low.
- Any replacement of CDEP needs to be carefully considered in relation to the needs of artists because art practice is different to virtually all other job creation or work-for-the-dole projects because it generates products for sale and involves cultural and self expression.

### **Visual arts are part of holistic arts and cultural practice for Indigenous people**

- SA Aboriginal artists do not make a demarcation between visual arts practice and performance (song and dance) and any other expressions of cultural identity and Indigenous spiritual beliefs. They are disappointed that the government continues to make distinctions. An example is the terms of reference of the Inquiry being restricted to visual arts and crafts. This is thought to be insensitive to Indigenous ways of viewing the world.

### **Support for artists to address needs of all community members**

- Funding for Aboriginal artists and arts projects needs to be available to young and old artists, metropolitan and rural communities. Funding needs to recognise and highlight the diversity and uniqueness of Indigenous culture.

### **Retail outlets**

- The meeting delegates are concerned by the lack of Indigenous owned and controlled retail outlets and art galleries in rural SA. When retail outlets are exclusively controlled by non-Indigenous people then artists have limited access to markets. Artists working through mainstream galleries or retail outlets are not in a position to ensure that their art/crafts are presented and promoted in culturally appropriate ways.

### **Funding**

- Short term operational funding makes it extremely difficult for recipients to plan beyond the calendar or financial year. The meeting strongly endorsed a request for longer term funding periods – such as triennial for art centres and projects.
- The delegates requested better monitoring of funding to the arts sector so that funds allocated to organisations for Indigenous arts projects are spent on arts projects and not diverted elsewhere.

### **Artists in custody**

- Australia has a disproportionately high proportion of Aboriginal people in custody/prisons. Indigenous artists in prisons urgently need support – that is both fair and consistent. At present there is limited support across SA for Indigenous prisoners and access for funding to provide arts and cultural support to prisoners is ad hoc. Some projects in specific prisons have had excellent results and art practice has rehabilitation possibilities and is a potential opportunity for up-skilling and earning income after release.

### **“Indigenisation” of workplace**

- The sector needs more skilled Indigenous people working as managers, administrators, coordinators, trainers.
- More focused and targeted training is required to train up Indigenous people to take salaried positions in the arts sector.

## **Feedback from Sharing Our Stories Forum held August 2006**

More than 80 South Australian Indigenous artists participated in a two day Forum held at the Adelaide Festival Centre in August 2006 convened by Ku Arts. The following outcomes were recorded in the Forum Report. *These were endorsed again by the delegates at the meeting held in Adelaide in November and it was requested that they be conveyed to government and funding agencies.*

### **Feedback from Artists**

#### ***General feedback***

#### **Needs**

- € Capital is needed – for buildings for art spaces – there are not enough around SA.
- € Database of artists and trainers that can be available for organisations/people looking to find an artist for a project/event.
- € Aboriginal artists need ambassadors/advocates representing regional and metropolitan areas. That they could meet regularly (say every six months).
- € Grant submissions – require support and training for community in grant writing.
- € Professional development for artists is needed – portfolios.

#### **Issues & possibilities**

- € CDEP – there were a number of key issues identified: the apparently inconsistent application of CDEP guidelines from community to community; the retention by CDEP programs of copyright and intellectual property rights to creative work produced by CDEP participants; and the 12-month limitation on new CDEP positions (it generally being the case that CDEP positions do not lead to employment).
- € Youth – help, support – how?
- € Annual exhibition for young people
- € Establishment of a statewide alliance or network
- € Interaction between regions to be encouraged and facilitated
- € Aim to bring city and country Indigenous artists together – not kept separate
- € Talking together – good communication is very important – work for unity
- € Keep SICAD going
- € Promotion and space – how do artists access it?



- € Webpage as a portal to artist and project information
- € The importance of supporting and finding out cultural knowledge and stories
- € Important that any developments are family friendly

## **Feedback from Arts Workers in Arts Projects**

### ***General feedback***

- € The arts projects outside of APY Lands would like a similar thing to KU Arts for the rest of the State. This was expressed by Lincoln, Ceduna, Port Augusta, and Hawker representatives
- € That the kind of support that Ku Arts delivers to APY Centres is perceived as extremely valuable
- € That Ku Arts and APY artists have provided very valuable leadership to artists throughout the state
- € That SA would benefit from two dedicated arts workers/administrators for Indigenous artists/arts projects for the State within Government (Arts SA)
- € That artists would benefit from visiting other arts projects
- € Make Sharing Our Stories & Our MOB annual events
- € Expand Indigenous arts support in State Government
- € Facilitate workshops for/in art centres for other art centres – and visits
- € Meetings for arts worker (staff in arts projects) held on a regional basis would be valuable.
- € That strategic planning for the support of Indigenous arts projects in SA would be highly valuable

### ***Areas of support/services needed by arts projects***

- € Marketing – identifying niches and opportunities - where product fits in the market, what to produce
- € Human resources – more staff needed in existing centres that are staffed and those that don't have dedicated staff (ie. Flinders Ranges - Yartawarli)
- € Art spaces – physical places for artists to make art
- € Artist development – ways of nurturing and engaging new artists
- € Product development
- € Professional development for arts workers
- € Clarification about status of CDEP
- € Support for CDEP/auspiced arts projects wanting to separately incorporate
- € Enterprise development – building up the business of an art centre/project
- € Business planning and support
- € Business mentoring would be valuable
- € Support for cultural re-discovery and imagery
- € Generating enthusiasm amongst community for participation in arts projects

## **Forum Resolutions**

### **CDEP**

That changes to CDEP need to be fully explained by DEWR and their impact on Indigenous arts projects around the State gauged. The new regulations relating to putting participants 'through CDEP' and limiting any new registrations to a maximum of 12 months in any one

project will have implications for supporting and recruiting young and new artists. Lobbying of government to clarify and/or amend policy may be necessary.

### **Aboriginal Artists' Alliance – South Australia**

The formation of an alliance was discussed, the role of the alliance being to support and resource Aboriginal artists from around SA including those living in remote, regional and metropolitan situations. The alliance needs to have community representation. The alliance would give Aboriginal artists assistance with the following information and resourcing:

- € Would employ a coordinator
- € Information about funding – who, what, where?
- € Establish a website
- € Prepare and circulate newsletters
- € Assist artists with presentation and promotion
- € Would lobby Galleries, bring artists and artworks to the attention of art dealers
- € Would help provide appropriate training to CDEP participants, artists

(Note that a resolution was passed seeking Ku Arts' assistance in filling the role of an alliance through the SICAD project and through its advocacy – see below.)

### **OUR MOB Exhibition & Sharing Our Stories Forum**

Make the OUR MOB Statewide Exhibition of Regional and Remote Aboriginal Artists and Sharing Our Stories Forums annual events.

SA needs a Statewide Exhibition of Aboriginal Youth Art – to be held annually and open to schools, TAFEs etc.

### **Leadership and participation**

Additional significant comments made by participants were:

“We need to make a personal and community-wide commitment to develop ourselves, our community and our children.”

“It's time for young people to stand up, learn from their elders, unite and speak up.”

### **KEY RESOLUTIONS:**

The general manager of Ku Arts chaired the closing session. Marvyn McKenzie proposed two resolutions that were endorsed by the majority of artists and participants:

- That Ku Arts continue with the Statewide Indigenous Community Arts Development Project (SICAD) as a means of addressing the issues and opportunities raised by the forum.
- That Ku Arts continue to provide leadership, facilitate State-wide development and assist in representing issues to government and other stakeholders.
- It was also resolved that that Ku Arts would convene a meeting in approximately three months (proposed late November) in Adelaide, to be attended by at least one Aboriginal representative(s) from each of the regions, KU Arts staff (including SICAD staff), CASA staff, and Arts SA. CASA staff pledged support in facilitating

the meeting. The meeting will discuss the resolutions and outcomes of the ***Sharing Our Stories*** Forum and map a plan for future action.

Felicity Wright  
SICAD Project Coordinator  
November 27 2006