

Indigenous art centres

STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN



Australian Government

**Department of Communications,
Information Technology and the Arts**

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Services**

Australia Council for the Arts



Indigenous art is fundamentally important to Australian culture and has been growing strongly in market share and critical recognition for many years. However, few people realise that much of the work we now celebrate originates from art centres operating in remote Indigenous communities.

Indigenous art centres are building capacity, maintaining culture and generating income and employment opportunities in remote Indigenous communities—while also producing some of Australia’s most exciting visual art.

Strong art centres play a role in maintaining and strengthening cultural values—operating as meeting places and offering opportunities for training, education and enterprise. They also play a vital economic role in Indigenous communities—some of the most remote communities in the country.

This economic aspect is crucial not only to the Indigenous art and craft industry but also to the health of the communities generally. In most communities sales from art are the only externally-generated source of income. This strategy and action plan seeks to elevate the economic importance of the industry as well as recognise its cultural significance to all Australians.

The strengthening and positioning of art centres—many of which struggle to make their mark in wider commercial activities through lack of resources—will ensure that Australia’s Indigenous art sector continues to flourish and excel. By building a sense of community pride and well-being they can do much to alleviate serious social problems in remote areas.

Art centres are supported by two major peak advocacy and support agencies—Desart, the Association of Central Australian Aboriginal Art and Craft Centres and ANKAAA, the Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists. They work on behalf of their member centres to promote, resource, educate and protect the work of Indigenous artists and art centres.

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

The Australian Government’s *Indigenous art centre strategy and action plan* is a co-ordinated government approach aimed at building a strong and sustainable Indigenous visual arts sector, characterised by a stable and profitable base of Indigenous art centres, producing and distributing works of artistic excellence.

KEY RESULT AREAS

The objectives will be achieved through closer cooperation between Commonwealth, State and Territory funding agencies and results will be sought in the following areas:

1. Stabilised funding
2. Business management
3. Employment and training
4. Professional art practice
5. Community capacity and maintenance of culture
6. Data collection and research

	Key result area	Strategy	Actions
1	Stabilised funding	More strategic interventions	The Australian Government, and other government agencies with policy and funding responsibility, to work cooperatively to develop agreed long-term support strategies for art centres.
		Improved funding models	<p>Introduction of outcome-based (performance-based) funding models for art centres, linked to individual business plans.</p> <p>Art centre benchmarking, to provide a method of categorising art centres and areas of need which can provide a basis for funding.</p> <p>Consideration of triennial funding for some centres.</p> <p>Consideration of contract-based funding for some centres.</p> <p>Increased stability and predicability of government payments.</p>
		Improved grant management practices	<p>Introduction of improved grant administration practices, such as 'on notice' provisions for centres where funding is to be withdrawn.</p> <p>Increased procedural transparency and certainty.</p>
2	Business management	Business planning	Assistance with development of realistic and useful business plans for art centres.
		Governance and accountability	<p>Assistance with introduction of stable governance arrangements and clarification of accountability requirements</p> <p>Increased Indigenous involvement and control.</p>
		Bookkeeping and administration	Assistance and training to improve standards of record keeping and general administration
		Marketing and industry development	Support for regional initiatives to assist marketing and promotion of Indigenous visual arts.

	Strategic use of support organisations	Utilisation of the ANKAAA and Desart to create information hubs and provide business management assistance. Support for formation of similar organisations in other States/regions.
	Shared services	Investigate opportunities for shared contracting for goods and services etc.
Employment and training	Indigenous employment	Recruitment and training of more Indigenous employees in art centres.
	Human resource management	Support for ANKAAA and Desart to assist art centres with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruitment of appropriate staff, including developing job descriptions and selection documentation for art centre coordinators and job packaging • training and development programs • succession planning • coverage for staff leave etc.
	Conditions of employment	Promotion of minimum standards in areas such as centre facilities, accommodation etc. Clarification of application of Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) in art centres.
	Professional development	Access to professional development for staff (including Indigenous staff) and artists in areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financial management • small business management • professional arts management, art storage and conservation • intellectual property issues • professional ethics.
	Arts development officers	Support for a network of Arts Development Officers for regional areas.
	Volunteers	Encourage access to expertise through volunteer and exchange programs.

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<p>Professional art practice</p>	<p>Art centre accreditation</p>	<p>Development of an accreditation program for art centres that meet professional industry and ethical standards.</p>
	<p>Increased art industry professionalism</p>	<p>Introduction of Codes of Conduct to encourage increased professionalism in relationships between artists, art centres and the market.</p> <p>Development of suggested standard clauses for use in contracts between art centres and artists.</p>
	<p>Excellence in art production</p>	<p>Provide technical skills development opportunities for artists, such as regionally-based workshops for artists, designed to introduce new techniques and refine art practice.</p> <p>Pursue partnerships with art schools and colleges.</p> <p>Artist-in-residence programs.</p>
	<p>Improved curatorial practice and conservation of artworks</p>	<p>Provide skills development opportunities for art centre coordinators, aimed at boosting curatorial and conservation skills, art market awareness and contemporary Indigenous art industry background.</p> <p>Pursue mentoring and exchange programs for art centre coordinators, in partnership with art museums, commercial galleries, art schools, individual artists.</p>
	<p>Increased awareness of moral rights and intellectual property issues</p>	<p>Ensure correct attribution of artworks.</p> <p>Encourage respect for the intellectual and moral rights of artists.</p> <p>Inform artists about their moral and intellectual property rights.</p> <p>Establish ownership of intellectual property in circumstances where, for example, artists may be employed under CDEP and are therefore 'employees' of art centres.</p>

	Authenticity and provenance	<p>Encourage regional labelling systems that provide assurance to buyers about the authenticity of artworks.</p> <p>Encourage professional standards of labelling and documentation of artworks.</p> <p>Encourage the development of a provenance database and other authentication tools.</p>
5	Community capacity and maintenance of culture	Cultural transmission
		Support the maintenance and transfer of language and culture through art practice.
		Community capacity building
		<p>Support the role of art centres in creating stronger communities through increased employment opportunities and cultural activity.</p> <p>Recognise the role of art centres in promoting health and nutrition outcomes—and as safe houses or refuges.</p>
		Improvement of physical infrastructure
		Pursue funding for capital works such as the construction of new buildings and upgrade of existing facilities.
		Protection against misappropriation
		Advocacy of respect for ownership of stories and techniques and protection against misappropriation by unauthorised users.
		Interpretation
		Interpreting artworks for non-Indigenous audiences, with regard to cultural sensitivities and protection of confidential information.
6	Data collection and research	Industry analysis and research
		Undertake an ongoing program of research and industry analysis.
		Information sharing
		Encourage greater sharing of information between all stakeholders.

