

My name is Tony Bond and I am the director of AP Bond - Art Dealer a retail art gallery situated at 95 Unley Road, Unley, South Australia. I have been trading in indigenous art for 10 years. I should also note that my experience is mainly related to Central Australian sector.

With the benefit of being able to read many of the other submissions I have chosen to submit an opinion on:

**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;**

High profile artists whose careers have been nurtured by community art centers are being targeted by private art dealers. Usually the transactions between the private art dealer and the artist involves the abominable practice of swapping of second hand four wheel drive vehicles for 'x' amount of paintings. Often a relative of the artist is supplied with a cheap vehicle, several jerry cans of fuel, a couple of loaves of bread and maybe a take away chicken to drive out to the community and lure the often elderly artist to "town" on promise of a 4WD. The cheaper vehicle usually being given to the helpful relative on the timely presentation of the desired artist(s)! Now the artist who will usually have no idea as to the value or roadworthiness of any car must also incorporate the cost of this additional vehicle into the period. This practice also encourages the artist to paint poor quality works and more often that not with the collaboration of several paint brush wielding assistants! One only has to have a look at the online internet auctions which are overloaded with poor quality Aboriginal art of dubious origins and quality many of which are painting painted for cars. Not a few of these are purportedly from well known and sought after artists. In short I'd like to see the practice of "cars for art" stopped.

As it has been well discussed in other submissions that community art centers provide highly important financial and cultural benefits to the communities is beyond debate. In most case it is the only form of industry available to the residents. It also goes without saying that Aboriginal people have strong ties to their homelands. However I am not totally convinced that every senior indigenous artist would choose to live permanently at their remote community. Having visited numerous Aboriginal communities and witnessed the abject poverty on them cities like Alice Springs must be at least a tempting part time refuge. So whether we like it or not there exists a steady influx of people including coming in from their traditional communities. Not all of these are "lifestyle" refugees. Many elderly people come to town for medical, personal and family reasons. And lets not forget that the people of Central Australia are traditional nomadic.

Up until recently art centers have not provided for their artists whilst in "town". This allowed the private dealers to have free reign over any visiting artist and often encouraging them to stay for many months. Thankfully in Alice Springs some community based art centers have now established good quality facilities for the artists to paint while visiting the city. These town based art centers are staffed by well chosen art coordinators who deal with a large range of daily duties related to the

artists and their families. More often than not the employees will have a good basic knowledge of the artist's language and culture. Being employees rather than financially motivated private dealers the atmosphere is more relaxed conducive to producing good quality work and the cultivation of emerging talent as well as the established artists.

I like the idea of the community run art centers taking it to the private dealers and at least competing with them on a more level playing field. I am sure that many people won't want to see this happen but I see a large growth in town based community run art centers.

Another issue that cannot be ignored is that of the "free agency" of an artist. Private dealers are prone to use this as a stick to beat down any complaints regarding their practices. It goes without saying that an artist is free to paint wherever he or she may choose. But that does not protect them from the unscrupulous. Some artists don't have access to a community based art center. Some artists have developed mutually rewarding relationships with private dealers.

In closing I would like to suggest some form of accreditation and some form of accountability introduced to vet those who choose to deal with indigenous artists or in indigenous art. A certain amount of transactional visibility might be appropriate. It is an honour to be involved in the indigenous art business in these dynamic times. And I am sure that anyone who felt that they treated artists and the industry as a whole with integrity would welcome some such accreditation. I for one would proudly display it.

Yours Sincerely,

Tony Bond

Adelaide, South Australia