



GPO Box 2152
Darwin NT 0801
Ph: 08 8981 6134
Fax: 08 8981 6048
Email: info@ankaaa.org.au
Web: www.ankaaa.org.au



Thursday, 12 April 2007

The Secretary,
Senate Environment, Communications Information Technology and the Arts Legislation
Committee,
PO Box 6100 Parliament House,
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: Inquiry into Australia's Indigenous visual arts and craft sector

ANKAAA is the peak advocacy and support agency for Indigenous art centres and artists in the Top End and Kimberley regions. Our Art Centre members are Aboriginal owned and operated business and community organisations which produce Aboriginal fine art and craft which is sold in Australia and internationally. They are an important source of meaningful jobs, training and income for artists and local people in remote communities. On average Art Centres return 60% of the retail sales price of art they sell to artists, who in turn support themselves and their extended families within and across communities. The remaining 40% is used to support business operations, employ and train local staff, purchase materials and support a wide range of community and cultural activities in the community.

Recently, the organisation was invited to address the Senate Committee and this provided an important opportunity for the ANKAAA Executive Committee to speak up for our art centre membership.

Since that time, the ANKAAA Executive Committee has met to discuss the hearing and agreed to write a letter to the Senate Committee outlining a number of additional concerns. These are as follows:

1. The continued focus by the media on the negative and less reputable dealings in the Indigenous arts sector in their reporting of the findings of the Inquiry is very damaging to the industry in the long term. The Executive Committee is concerned that not enough attention is being paid to the positive and beneficial role art centres play in many communities. The ANKAAA membership now urgently needs to consider how it can raise public awareness of ethical outlets of Indigenous art and best practice. While ANKAAA has raised its profile through its publications, websites

and attendance at public forums, it is now necessary to develop a marketing campaign emphasising the benefits of purchasing art from reputable dealers.

2. The Indigenous Art Commercial Code of Conduct being developed by NAVA will be finished later this year. In order for art centres to implement many of the recommendations, additional funding will be required to set up best practice systems, provide training and promote good practice in the sector. While many of the art centres are already operating as best practice institutions and ANKAAA is delivering training and support in business development areas, little work has been done to raise awareness of the IACCC amongst Indigenous artists in the Territory and Western Australia.
3. The third issue is that of permits. We discussed the proposals in the October 2006 Discussion Paper entitled "Access to Aboriginal Land under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Land Rights Act* – Time for Change?" at our regional meetings held in the Kimberley, Tiwi Islands, Arnhem Land and Darwin in late 2006. There was strong consensus that our members do not support the removal of the permit system which currently operates under NTALR Act. Very few people are denied permits and the system is a way of monitoring who is in the community and as a last resort a means of asking people to leave, or restricting access, if they have not behaved in an appropriate manner. While the current permit system is working for ANKAAA members, the membership also recognise that there is a need to improve the way in which the system is administered.

We thank you for the opportunity to raise these issues.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Birrinbirrin
Chairman