

promoting regional distinctiveness

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION, MAIN STREET PROGRAMS, AGRIBUSINESS DIVERSITY, VALUE-ADDING TO PRIMARY PRODUCTION, TOURISM, AND TOURISM AGAIN - THESE ARE THE ISSUES THAT DRIVE STATE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENTS GRAPPLING WITH HOW THE REGIONAL AREAS OF AUSTRALIA WILL BE SHAPED IN THE FUTURE OF A GLOBAL ECONOMY. THE CULTURAL INDUSTRY MOVEMENT OF THE 90S HAS BEGUN TO CARVE OUT A PLACE FOR ITSELF IN POLICIES AND PLANS THAT ARE STARTING TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW TOURISM MARKET SHARE CAN BE MAINTAINED, ABOUT QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PEOPLE MOVING INTO AN AREA, ABOUT QUALITY OF LIFE TO KEEP PEOPLE FROM MOVING OUT. MOVERS AND SHAKERS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT RECOGNITION FOR THE CULTURAL PRODUCERS OF A REGION CAN LEAD TO TANGIBLE RESULTS.

It's a movement that some challenge - can all that culture signifies and includes be encapsulated in economic statistics? But when matters of livelihood are at stake, many artists have found that to have a voice on regional issues or a say in tourism strategies is positive. Any push for industry recognition has to be based on the creativity and innovation of local artists and their long-term commitment to living and working in the area. Artistic inspiration drawn from a regional environment often defines its distinctiveness. *Miles ahead* found many examples of cultural events and initiatives that are firmly embedded in an area, and which contribute to its concepts of identity as well as to its economy. A small selection follows.

"I THINK ALL ARTS ORGANISATIONS IN THE REGIONS WOULD AGREE WITH THE DIFFICULTIES THEY FACE IN DEVELOPING AUDIENCES IN A SMALL POPULATION WHERE THE ARTS CAN NOT COMPETE WITH SPORTING EVENTS FOR LARGER NUMBERS. BEING ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE ARTS CAN GET THOSE NUMBERS IS IMPORTANT. PUTTING ON MORE FREE EVENTS CAN HELP GROW AUDIENCES AND FESTIVALS ARE AN EXCELLENT WAY OF EXTENDING PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES AND THE APPEAL OF THE ARTS. BUT WE NEED TO MARKET MORE TO COMMUNICATE THE POTENTIAL."

Fabrizio Calafuri, Director, Festival of Darwin



Adrienne Williams, See-saw Illustration and Design, for Darwin Theatre Company.

adding value to your region...

The Festival of Darwin hasn't lost a journalist to a crocodile in two years

The Festival of Darwin has become one of Australia's leading regional arts festivals. Conceived in 1978 as the Bougainvillea Festival, its roots remain in the community as an event that provides residents with enjoyable experiences. Involving more local groups that focus on the multicultural community, along with imported arts activities, enhances the community's opportunities and the festival's program. The festival adds value to the community by providing an event with a strong arts focus and opportunities to be part of a larger marketing framework. Its popularity and increasing national media coverage also is attracting visitors and tourists.

The festival, with funding from the Northern Territory Department of Arts and Museums, Darwin City Council, the Australia Council, Festivals Australia and Playing Australia, has done a lot to develop, present, expose and promote new artistic product through its events, and recognises the audience could be larger if more resources were allocated to marketing.

Approximately 40,000 people attended the festival over a two and a half week period in 1997. This number includes the whole range of festival events; The Grand Parade and concert afterwards, which attracts about 8,000 people; the Teddy Bears' Picnic, which attracts 4,000 or 5,000; and audiences for events by local arts organisations, including the Darwin Theatre Company and Brown's Mart Community Arts.

The Festival of Darwin is a key player in the development of an Australia Asia Pacific Cultural Village concept, which is being incorporated into the next festival. It recognises the fact that Aborigines, Pacific Islanders, the Japanese, Macassars and Indonesians populated Darwin

long before the Europeans, and that there has been a longstanding community interest from various cultural and community groups to have a centre that would reflect the peoples of the region. Many of the South Pacific Arts festivals researched have developed a cultural centre as an installation during their festivals - a place for people to visit daily, setting the environment for various cultural activities to occur.

A steering committee of representatives of local arts and cultural organisations is looking at how the festival can celebrate the geographical region and its communities, provide a focus on these cultures as part of the festival, which is about the geographic region, with the focus changing each year on the peoples who were here before the Europeans.

In 1997, the Festival of Darwin had a \$102,000 operational budget: \$80,000 from the NT Government, \$22,000 from Darwin City Council. Finding money for marketing is one of their greatest challenges. Project grants from the Australia Council and the Department of Communications and the Arts are very important in the development of its artistic content; however, it has found that 95% of these funds go toward program development. Some of the costs of promoting an individual event can be allocated from these grants.

Timing and tourism

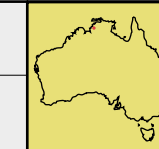
The tourism industry recognises that the Festival of Darwin is adding value through the arts to a region that attracts tourists primarily because of its natural attractions, such as Kakadu. In recent years, the Australian Tourist Commission has included the Festival of Darwin in its overseas promotions, highlighting Australia's art and culture, and festivals.

through the arts



DESTINATION: Darwin NT

COMPANY: Festival of Darwin



Not only has the name of the festival changed, but also the timing, moving first from June to August, then to September in 1998, prompted by a growing relationship with the tourism industry. While the Northern Territory Tourist Commission, airlines and hotels have been supportive of the festival, they negotiated with the committee to make this move, out of the already busy dry season. With hotels already at 100% capacity, there was little incentive to sponsor the festival to attract more people.

Although the festival committee lacks the resources to quantify the number of tourists who may visit Darwin because of the festival, it does know that people have, in the past, planned their winter escapes, primarily to enjoy the tropical climate and spend time with family and friends during the dry season - and attempt to make travel plans to coincide with the festival. When the festival first changed its timing to August from June, they received many calls from people who were disappointed to have missed the festival.

With the Festival of Darwin moving to September in 1998, the Australian Tourist Commission also now will be able to market September in the Northern Territory as festival month, with smaller events in Katherine, Tenant Creek and Jabiru.

Strengthening links with these regional events has opened up the potential for significant marketing opportunities and resources, such as a viable touring circuit. Maintaining links with the tourism industry is an important strategy for the Festival of Darwin to help optimise its appeal through support from the following tourism schemes:

Interstate Journalists' Scheme

Over two years, the festival has benefited greatly from its involvement in the Interstate Journalists' Scheme, which has an open application policy and is administered by state tourism branches. The Northern Territory Tourist Commission has funded air travel and accommodation for national media to come to the festival, resulting in extensive coverage in all the major newspapers around the country.

The festival negotiates and solicits journalists to come. Money is provided and, while it takes considerable effort, it undertakes all communication and negotiations with journalists and editors to ensure that they reach the right media people to cover the types of activities they offer . . . and not lose a journalist or two to a crocodile at Kakadu National Park or a dinner at a local restaurant.

Major Events Marketing Scheme

The Festival of Darwin has received \$15,000 annually for the past three years as part of the Major Events Marketing Scheme, which is open to all organisations that can demonstrate their ability to attract visitors outside the Territory.

The importance of maintaining this support and developing the interest of the tourism industry were major considerations for the committee in its decision to move the festival dates.

The Festival of Darwin has been able to make the most of its marketing budget through sponsorship and community partnerships.

Fabrizio says that "extending partnerships within the community to include other sectors like retail and tourism, who are important stakeholders in the Festival of Darwin, will attract more people to a city that is known for its cultural vibrancy".

THERE IS A TIME WHEN A MATURE ORGANISATION NEEDS TO REFRESH ITS IMAGE IN THE MARKETPLACE, LOOK AT WHAT IT IS DOING AND, IF NECESSARY, REINVENT ITSELF IN RESPONSE TO WHAT IS HAPPING IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

THE PRODUCT LIFE-CYCLE IS GENERALLY THOUGHT TO PROGRESS THROUGH THE FOLLOWING STAGES: INTRODUCTION, GROWTH, MATURITY, SATURATION, AND DECLINE.

how long does it take?

Sales of new products start to increase in the growth stage, increasing during maturity, level off and start to decline in the saturation phase. Life-cycles have a greater chance of being extended when an organisation has more control of the product.

The introduction of a new product for most manufacturers is based on a strategy for growth. Through effective merchandising and marketing, sales volume can be achieved as a means of achieving profit by applying marketing techniques that feature product differentiation, broader distribution and production economies of a larger scale. As demand increases and a product matures, it becomes necessary to develop diversification strategies, such as additional related products for existing or new markets.

"Fabrics from Ernabella Arts echo the land of the Pitjantjatjara women."

Better Homes and Gardens, 1994

"Outback Australia and a local community's art work have been linked to the Sydney theatrical scene through a dramatic ochre-coloured gown featuring a blend of traditional design with contemporary pizzazz."

"Arts", *The Daily Telegraph*, November 21, 1997

Aboriginal art centres play an important role in their communities because artistic expression is an integral part of the culture. With the growing market interest in Aboriginal art, these centres can provide greater financial benefits to their communities, while also communicating a sense of understanding of their culture through the marketing of their products.

Issues that the arts centres face include limited access to information and resources; small staff with a diverse range of experience, commitment and skill levels; and high workload demands. They also face challenges of being isolated from market centres, and of competition from products made off-shore, marketed as Aboriginal designs and lower in price.

A community-based art centre at Ernabella, with a population of 400 Pitjantjatjara people in the South Australian central desert, Ernabella Arts Inc celebrates its fiftieth anniversary in 1998. Often referred to as the 'mother' of art and craft centres on the lands, Ernabella Arts is believed to be the oldest continually operating



Artist: Atipalku Intjalki; photographer: David Maigh

arts centre in the country, and was established initially by drawing upon traditional skills of spinning.

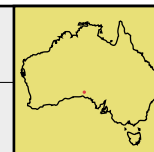
Since 1948, Pitjantjatjara women have demonstrated to wider communities their remarkable abilities as artists and designers, creating unique images inspired by their culture and environment. Based on their traditional skills and inherent creativity and building upon experience gained through their craft room, the artists have developed an enterprise in their community with the creation of innovative contemporary designs, artworks and craft products.

Of the communities that make up the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands, the designs from Ernabella are the most characteristic and definable of the region. This distinctiveness has become extremely useful as a marketing strategy. Ernabella Arts has therefore reached an enviable stage in product recognition, and the designs can be employed to assist in the identification and promotion of Ernabella artwork.

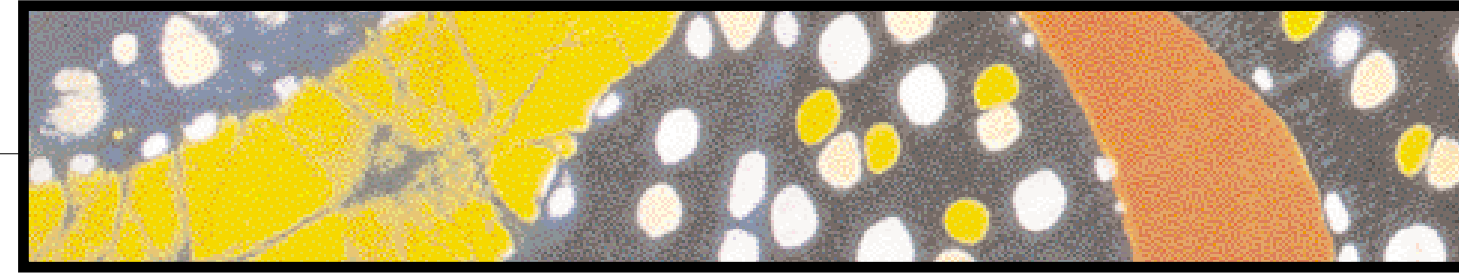
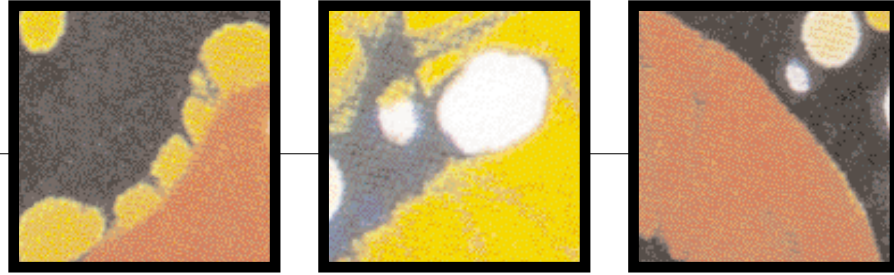
While based in tradition, Ernabella designs are vividly abstract and easily recognisable. The women consistently refuse to attach specific meanings to their designs, known regionally as Ernabellaku Walka, but they do acknowledge that they are indirectly inspired by their natural environment. Their underlying basis comes from the fluid, curvilinear abstract forms derived from the traditional women's practices of Milpatjunanyi (sand-story) and the decorations painted on the body for Inma (ceremony).

DESTINATION: Ernabella SA

COMPANY: Ernabella Arts Inc



SOME YEARS AGO, THE YOUNGER GENERATION OF ARTISTS TOOK UP THE PRINT MEDIUM WITH SPECTACULAR RESULTS. IN LESS THAN FIVE YEARS, ERNABELLA ARTS WAS ABLE TO DEVELOP ITS OWN SILK SCREEN WORKSHOP AND COLLECTION OF CONTEMPORARY ABORIGINAL TEXTILE DESIGNS.



The artists work daily at the centre's workshops, creating unique textiles, prints and carvings for the community and markets to enjoy. Ernabella artists and their work have gained recognition nationally and internationally through years of artistic exploration, training, production and touring.

Commonsense, intuition and market research can reveal whether or not it is better to establish new customers who have never tried the product or to emphasise product or brand differentiation as the better marketing strategy. With a strong determination to see their products both admired and used, Ernabella Arts does both.

The first Aboriginal community to learn batik methods, this medium has been synonymous with Ernabella since the early 70s. Their work in this area has been featured in major exhibitions in America, Europe, Indonesia and Australia, and represented in prominent public and private collections in Australia and overseas.

Some years ago, the younger generation of artists took up the print medium with spectacular results. In less than five years, Ernabella Arts was able to develop its own silk screen workshop and collection of contemporary Aboriginal textile designs. Thousands of metres of fabric have been printed at Ernabella, with sales to retailers, resorts and corporate clients.

From its remote community, the coordinator promotes new work and continues to develop the important relationships with key players in the art market, such as curators and writers. In 1996, The National Museum of Australia included both batik and screenprint designs in its exhibition, *Painting the Land Story*. During its fiftieth year, its list of exhibitions is impressive, including its fiftieth anniversary exhibition in August at Tandanya in Adelaide and international shows in London and Poland.

When Ernabella Arts showed both its batik and screenprint collection at CINAPE (Chicago International New Artforms Exhibition) in 1993, the marketing manager of Austrade in New York City attended and reported that Ernabella Arts screenprint designs had the potential to secure a good position in the United States design market. Leading European textile companies and retailers also expressed interest after seeing their designs at *Lizards, Snakes and Cattle dogs: Contemporary Australian Textiles*, held at the German Textile Museum.

A full page article on these screenprints, with colour photographs, in 1994, in *House and Garden*, a popular glossy magazine, resulted in attracting considerable consumer interest, with calls, for over a year, from all over Australia, to source where they could be purchased. Several leading Australian and international companies also expressed interest in using the designs and fabrics in forthcoming ranges.

A new chapter in its product history began in July 1993, when a group of artists travelled to Darwin to make etchings and lithographs at Northern Territory University. Since then, they have continued training and began experimenting with solarplate printmaking. Ernabella women are increasingly developing their own style. They plan to produce new editions of prints every year, while continuing with batik, screenprinting and painting in acrylics on canvas. Workshops in handpainted ceramics, supported through the Australia Council's partnerships program, also are being conducted with South Australia's Jam Factory Craft and Design Centre, with new product development emerging from the artists' interest in this new medium.

Of all the contemporary artforms of Central Australia, the fabric traditions of Ernabella have gained a considerable reputation in Australia and overseas. Ernabella artists are represented in the National Gallery of Australia, and other major public and private collections in Australia and overseas. The distinctive style of Ernabella art has been continually evolving.

In 1996, with one-year funding through ATSIC's draft cultural industry strategy program, Ernabella Arts Trading was established as a means for marketing and exporting a wide range of products manufactured from their textile designs. While original plans saw the establishment of an urban-based office, it found that the introduction of new products into a wider marketplace required more financial resources than were available.

The artists are displaying great determination in their direction of developing opportunities for self-sufficiency, as illustrated by their mission statement: *Ernabella Arts is a place where Pitjantjatjara grandmothers, mothers and daughters practise and develop their art in order to sustain, support and promote their cultural heritage and improve the lifestyle of local community members.*

The introduction of new techniques and products, alongside maintaining its profile through exhibitions, shows how Ernabella Arts has renewed their organisation, and is avoiding the 'decline' of a product life-cycle.

Research on the longevity of business has found that the average life span of a corporation is 50 years. Dr Peter Steidl, who has developed a training program for cultural organisations on *The Art of Strategic Planning*, notes that success is based on overall strategic direction, long term strategies and a plan; he says that "for those that have survived for hundreds of years, they have continually redefined their business idea or why it is important for them to be in existence, their role and value-adding which continues to evolve over time".