

AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

RESPONSE TO THE NIAA INDIGENOUS TOURISM FUND DISCUSSION PAPER

November 2019

CONTENTS

Contents	2
Introduction	3
Australia Council support for First Nations arts and culture	4
The growing economic value of cultural and creative industries	5
Australians' increasing engagement with First Nations arts	6
Growing tourist engagement with First Nations arts	6
Areas of opportunity	8
Supporting intergenerational cultural transfer in partnership with the Chosen program	8
Investment in cultural capabilities, labour force development and cultural hubs	10
Development of regional and remote community niche market opportunities	12
Expanding capital, project-based and operational support to art centres	13
Funding for participation in performing arts markets and showcases	14
Supporting the development of marketing skills for First Nations arts workers	15
Investing in large-scale art events, art fairs and festivals	15
Ownership and authenticity	16
Considerations for the Indigenous Tourism Fund	17

Introduction

Arts, culture and First Nations self-determination are central to the development of Indigenous¹ tourism in Australia. Culture is transmitted through art, and through art culture is kept strong. First Nations arts experiences play an important and growing role in tourism in Australia, both domestically and internationally.² They engage visitors with the uniqueness, depth and diversity of Australian culture while supporting local jobs and economies. First Nations arts excel globally and stand out as uniquely Australian: *the New York Times* recognised the Top End of Australia as a place to visit in 2018, partly due to the international interest surrounding the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair.³ First Nations arts provide an opportunity for First Nations peoples' economic development based on the strength of the world's oldest continuing living culture and storytelling stretching back for millennia.

The Australia Council is the Australian Government's principal arts funding and advisory body. The Australia Council welcomes the announcement of a new Indigenous Tourism Fund to support Indigenous tourism businesses to start-up or expand and we are pleased to provide this paper in response to the NIAA discussion paper. Our submission argues that as a priority area, the fund should support First Nations-led arts and culture enterprises and organisations to capitalise on tourism opportunities, and development of skills and opportunities for First Nations artists and culture workers in this space.

In particular, there are opportunities for the Indigenous Tourism Fund to:

- nurture talent and intergenerational cultural transmission through cultural apprenticeships in arts and cultural tourism in partnership with the Australia Council's Chosen program
- invest in cultural capabilities, labour force development and cultural hubs that optimise the arts and cultural base of urban, peri-urban, regional and remote communities
- invest in niche market opportunities in regional and remote Australia
- expand capital, project-based and operational support to art centres
- invest in First Nations performing arts infrastructure and cultural hubs for increased programming and presentation
- provide funding for participation in art fairs, performing arts markets and showcases domestically and internationally
- support the development of marketing skills for First Nations arts workers
- invest in large-scale arts events, art fairs and festivals to attract tourists to regional and remote Australia
- support and promote the sale of ethical and authentic First Nations arts and souvenirs.

¹ In this document, the terms 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander', 'First Nations' and 'Indigenous' are used interchangeably to refer with respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their arts and cultures. We understand that some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not comfortable with some of these words. The Australia Council means only respect when we use these words.

² Australia Council 2018, *International Arts Tourism: Connecting cultures*. Australia Council forthcoming, *Domestic Arts Tourism*. Based on Tourism Research Australia data.

³ Darwin is at number 12 in the list. New York Times, *52 Places to Visit in 2018*.

Australia Council support for First Nations arts and culture

As the Australian Government's principal arts funding and advisory body, the Australia Council champions and invests in Australian arts and creativity. We support all facets of the creative process and are committed to ensuring all Australians can experience the benefits of the arts and feel part of the cultural life of this nation.

The Australia Council has a statutory role to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts practice.⁴ We are committed to building on our long-term commitment to First Nations art and culture as one of the five strategic objectives of our strategy for 2020–24, *Creativity Connects Us*.⁵ We recognise the importance of First Nations people's self-determination, cultural authority and leadership to our collective prosperity.

The Australia Council undertakes a broad range of activity to support First Nations arts and cultural expression, including investment in the creation, development, production and distribution of artistic and cultural works. This is delivered through project grants and multi-year organisational funding; targeted investment through the [Chosen](#) and [Signature Works](#) programs; the [National Indigenous Arts Awards](#); and capacity building and strategic development nationally and internationally, including through our new [Custodianship Program](#), and [research](#) that investigates the First Nations arts ecology and promotes greater participation in First Nations arts experiences by all Australians. The Australia Council is also providing interim secretariat support to the First Nations arts sector for the development of a [National Indigenous Arts and Cultural Authority \(NIACA\)](#), including the facilitation of a national consultation process which will culminate in a National Summit for First Nations arts and culture in 2020.

Our investment is underpinned by First Nations decision-making and is delivered in collaboration with First Nations artists and communities. The Australia Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Strategy Panel provides expert strategic advice to ensure the effective delivery of programs and other strategic activities. Our dedicated funding to First Nations people, groups and organisations through our grants program is assessed wholly by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peer assessors.

⁴ Section 9(1)(ba) of the Australia Council Act 2013 (Cth) provides that it is a function of the Australia Council to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts practice.

⁵ Our strategy is outlined in the Australia Council Corporate Plan (2019–2023), [Creativity Connects Us](#).

The growing economic value of cultural and creative industries

Economic value and cultural value are intrinsically connected. The cultural and creative industries fuel regional and remote economies, the national economy and international economies, and help drive international engagement with Australia. We know cultural and creative activity already provides \$112 billion to Australia's GDP, which is an increase of 30% since 2009, and that cultural and creative industries provide 80% more value to the economy than agriculture, forestry and fishing.⁶ The role of arts and culture in driving innovation and growth is becoming ever more economically valuable as creativity underpins the jobs of the future. Fostering Australian arts will foster an innovative and creative nation that is competitive, attractive and dynamic.

Artists are among Australia's greatest assets for 'standing out' in an international context, playing an integral role in how Australia is perceived globally. Arts and culture drive direct and indirect investment in Australia, the development of a national brand and international business partnerships.

Governments worldwide are awakening to the growing economic value of the cultural and creative industries. The growing value of arts and cultural tourism is also acknowledged globally. Recent research from the United Nations World Tourism Organisation concluded that cultural tourism is 'set to remain one of the key tourism markets in the future'.⁷ First Nations arts play a central role in developing perceptions of our national identity and driving tourism to and within Australia.

Cultural strength and ethical art supporting regional tourism and employment

The Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF) supports regional development, tourism and employment through an annual showcase celebrating Queensland First Nations arts and culture. CIAF supports the careers of First Nations artists by providing a platform for exposure, income generation and professional development. It offers an ethical and world-class marketplace that inspires cultural exchange locally, nationally and internationally.

In July 2018, the CIAF program showcased over 300 visual artists and 230 performers, and attracted 45,600 attendees, with overnight visitor expenditure of \$3.5 million and day tripper expenditure of \$142,599. As well as \$665,715 in art sales, this includes the multiplier effect of this event for hotels, retailers and associated industries. Overall art sales were up 17% on the previous year, providing direct economic benefits for First Nations artists, and visitation

⁶ The cross-industry comparison is based on Gross Value Added. BCAR 2018, Cultural and creative activity in Australia, 2008–09 to 2016–17. ABS 2018, Australian System of National Accounts, 2017-18 (Cat. no. 5204.0).

⁷ World Tourism Organization (2018), [Tourism and Culture Synergies](#), UNWTO, Madrid, p.13.

at Cairns' cultural venues and galleries increased by 115%.

CIAF has become an event in which communities embrace inclusion and the wider audience values First Nations art and culture – 90% of attendees acknowledge CIAF for increasing their understanding of First Nations arts and culture.⁸

CIAF has also become a highlight of the tourism calendar. Its success in attracting visitors is endorsed through an enhanced sponsorship agreement with Cairns Airport, which recognises the significance of Queensland's First Nations arts and culture and the role CIAF plays in boosting regional tourism. CIAF was awarded the Indigenous Business Excellence Award for 2018 by the Cairns Chamber of Commerce. CIAF is supported through Australia Council Four Year Funding for Organisations (2017–20).

Australians' increasing engagement with First Nations arts

Over decades of Australia Council investment, we have seen a flourishing of expressions of First Nations arts and culture. Australia's First Nations arts are a source of great pride to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and a reflection of cultural strength, resilience, innovation and artistic excellence.

The Australia Council's *Building Audiences* research found audiences are attracted to stories and the strength of the storytelling quality of First Nations arts, and they want authentic, contemporary experiences, cultural insight and deeper understanding.⁹

More than ever, Australians are engaging with First Nations arts for their beauty, strength and power, and to understand who we are as a nation. Four in five Australians agree that Indigenous arts are an important part of Australia's culture (80%) and nearly half of all Australians are actively interested in First Nations arts (47%). Seven million Australians (35% of the population) attended First Nations arts in 2016 – a record number of attendance and double that of 2009.¹⁰ While the gap between interest (47%) and attendance (35%) is closing, it continues to highlight an opportunity to connect more Australians to First Nations arts experiences, and increase opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

Growing tourist engagement with First Nations arts

Australia's unique position as home to the world's oldest living culture is part of what makes Australia such a special place to visit. First Nations arts are increasingly part of the itinerary for both international and domestic tourists in Australia and can drive tourism in regional and remote areas.

The Australia Council's analysis of Tourism Research Australia's International Visitor Survey found that in 2017 over 820,000 international tourists engaged with First Nations arts while in Australia, an increase of 41% since 2013. This included attending First Nations

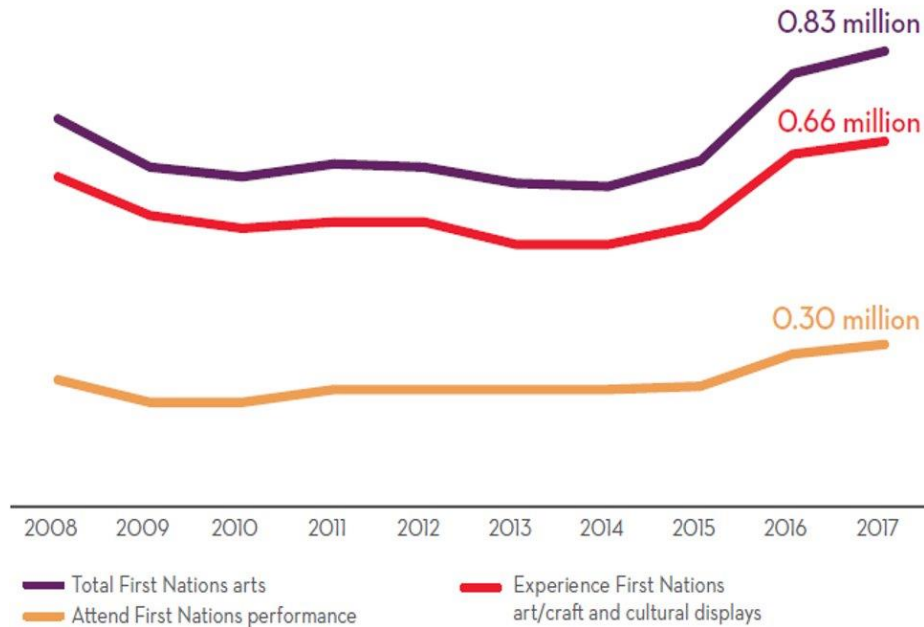
⁸ CIAF 2019, [*CIAF soars with new and enhanced airport partnership.*](#)

⁹ Australia Council, [*Building audiences: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts.*](#)

¹⁰ Australia Council 2017, [*Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey.*](#)

performances as well as art, craft and cultural displays. International tourists are more likely to engage with First Nations arts than attend sporting events.¹¹

Figure 1: International tourists attending First Nations arts 2008–2017



More than one in four international tourists who engaged with the arts in Australia in 2017 engaged with First Nations arts, and more than one in three of those who travelled outside of capital cities. International arts tourists who visited regional areas of the Northern Territory had particularly high levels of engagement – eight in ten attended a First Nations arts activity in 2017 (79%).¹²

Forthcoming Australia Council research (January 2020) shows that there is also strong growth in domestic tourists’ engagement with First Nations arts, both on daytrips and overnight trips. In 2018, Australians went on over 320,000 daytrips that included First Nations art, craft and cultural displays, an increase of 26% since 2016.

Additionally, in 2018, over half a million *overnight* trips by Australians included First Nations art, craft and cultural displays, an increase of 40% over the last five years. First Nations arts tourists are high value tourists; they tend to stay longer and spend more than domestic tourists overall. Domestic tourists who went on overnight trips including First Nations arts, craft and cultural displays spent an average of \$1,558 per trip, the highest spend of all arts activities and more than double the overall average overnight spend (\$685). The average nights per trip including First Nations art, craft and cultural displays was seven and a half nights, which was the longest average trip length of all arts activities and more than double

¹¹ Australia Council 2018, [International Arts Tourism: Connecting cultures](#). Based on Tourism Research Australia’s International Visitor Survey.

¹² Australia Council 2018, [International Arts Tourism: Connecting cultures](#). Based on Tourism Research Australia’s International Visitor Survey.

the average trip length overall (of three and a half nights). This could be in part due to tourists travelling further and into more remote regions to experience First Nations arts.

There is opportunity to capitalise on the growing appetite for First Nations arts experiences among tourists in Australia by investing in First Nations-led arts and culture enterprises and development of skills and opportunities for First Nations artists and culture workers as a priority area in the Indigenous Tourism Fund. Some specific opportunities are outlined below.

Areas of opportunity

Supporting intergenerational cultural transfer in partnership with the Chosen program

For the First Nations tourism industry to be sustainable there is a need to nurture talent for ongoing arts and cultural activity, without which First Nations cultural tourism will not be possible. Intergenerational cultural transfer is vital for artists to gain their cultural knowledge and is a key pathway for artists to acquire their cultural capital, thus ensuring cultural succession planning. It also gives artists permission to practice their cultural work and to continue to pass on their knowledge and languages. It also recognises that arts and culture are key pillars for the participation and benefit of First Nations peoples in the creative and cultural economy.

Data from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey shows that older First Nations Australians are more likely to participate in and earn income from First Nations arts, and that participation rates have declined in remote Australia.¹³ This highlights the importance of supporting Elders to pass on cultural knowledge to younger generations before it is lost, and of investment to engage young First Nations people in the arts.

Macquarie University's national survey of remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists working in the Central Desert and the APY lands found there was unanimous agreement that 'Artists/writers like myself can train young people in the community to become artists/writers'.¹⁴ While art centres can facilitate intergenerational cultural transfer they rarely have the funding to support these activities and the work goes unpaid.

The Australia Council's Chosen program is a strategic initiative that aims to ensure the vibrancy of cultural inheritance for future generations of First Nations artists by supporting community-led cultural apprenticeships and residencies. It is an example of a culturally based program and self-determination in both program design and delivery. Chosen empowers First Nations communities to take control and plan for how they will nurture younger people from their community in the arts and/or culture. Chosen ensures artistic and cultural knowledge being passed on to the next generation in the most culturally appropriate manner, which is by empowering Senior First Nations people. Chosen sets out to reinvestigate the cultural practice of master apprentice relationships within the arts.

¹³ Australia Council 2017, *Living Culture: First Nations arts participation and wellbeing*, based on ABS data.

¹⁴ Throsby C & Petetskaya K 2019, *Integrating Art Production and Economic Development in the Central Desert (NT) and the APY Lands (SA)*: National Survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists. Macquarie University, pg 79.

The Australia Council piloted the Chosen program in 2013. The outcomes were astounding and highlighted extraordinary success – success as defined by the communities themselves; activating community goals, enabling engaged participation and building on existing community assets. Importantly, through Chosen we are finding new innovative models arising from community that achieve real benefits and outcomes for young people, and recognise the vital role of arts and cultural practitioners in shaping vibrant communities and a future of possibilities for the next generation.

Applicants describe a diverse range of delivery models for the transfer of knowledge between Elders (and/or professional artists and cultural practitioners) and the younger generations. These include multiple mentors working with multiple young people, one mentor working with multiple young people, one-on-one mentoring, and mentors working with young people who then become mentors to the next generation. Project proposals draw on collaborations with language centres, art centres, schools, local councils, galleries and collecting institutions, the justice system, the tourism sector, small to medium arts organisations, festivals, community organisations and housing departments.

Objectives include professional development, increased artistic skills, improved judgement and decision-making abilities, increased self-confidence and respect, development of the next generation of Indigenous artists across geographic regions and art forms, increased potential for income generation from practice, successful cross generational engagement within communities, and increased social cohesion as a result.

The strategic program opened for the first time in 2016 with support from states and territories. Within its current budget to date, the program has supported 21 of 45 applications received, providing \$2.1 million in funding (of \$8.4 million requested).

The unmet demand for culturally based programs is immense. There is an opportunity for the Indigenous Tourism Fund to partner with the Australia Council to offer funding for community-led cultural apprenticeships and residencies in arts and culture enterprises or organisations that are working in the tourism sector. This investment in intergenerational cultural transfer would help ensure First Nations cultural tourism can grow and thrive.

Intergenerational cultural transmission supporting new generations of artists

The APY Art Centre Collective facilitates and markets the work of 500+ Anangu Artists across the arts centres of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) lands of SA. Through the Collective, the Chosen program has supported *Kulata Tjuta* (many spears), a cultural renewal project sharing skills across generations.

The *Kulata Tjuta* project started at Tjala Arts as a small project involving five men in Amata learning the skills of spear making. It has grown to include over 150 Anangu men across seven APY art centres and an equal number of female participants creating piti (large

wooden bowls).

Elders are thrilled with both the cultural and employment outcomes of the project and there have been major artistic outcomes including a Telstra Art Award¹⁵ and large scale installations at The National Gallery and at the Art Gallery of South Australia as part of Tarnanthi 2015 and 2017. These installations have captured international attention.

An outcome of the Collective's work has been to open the APY Gallery and shopfront in Sydney and Adelaide as a platform for emerging First Nations artists to connect with a wide audience and market outside of their remote communities. Artists' studios have been set up at APY Gallery Adelaide for emerging artists – they have watched, listened and learned from senior men and women of the APY Lands and now it is the young people's turn to find new ways of sharing these traditions and stories. The shopfront has enabled increased sales, economic opportunities and ethical trade in world-class First Nations arts.

Investment in cultural capabilities, labour force development and cultural hubs

There is a cultural asset base in communities which requires development to increase the capacity of First Nations people in urban, peri-urban, regional and remote communities to participate in the tourism industry. Arts and cultural production is a major avenue for providing income and economic opportunities for First Nations people, particularly in remote Australia, and has the potential to drive tourism.

Macquarie University's national survey of remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists collects systematic data on the economic conditions of cultural practitioners in remote regions across Australia, and on how First Nations people use their cultural capital to contribute towards both the economic and cultural sustainability of communities in such areas.

Figure 2 is a diagram from the survey undertaken in East Arnhem Land from 2012–2014. A mapping exercise allowed the research team to identify the cultural-economic activities that are currently practised in the region, classified into three categories relating to Yolngu culture and cultural expression. These are:

- Creative artistic activities such as: writing or storytelling; performing; composing music; making arts or crafts; or making a film, video, animation, TV or radio program.
- Cultural maintenance activities such as: participating in ceremonies; caring for country; being a member of a cultural board, council or committee; archiving or record-keeping; interpreting, translating or cultural consulting.

¹⁵ In 2017, Australia's most prestigious Indigenous art award was won by a collaboration between Frank Young, Anwar Young and Rhonda Dick from the Amata community for their work *Kulata Tjuta – Wati kulunypa tjukurpa* (*Many spears – Young fella story*). Frank is one of the Senior Men in the APY Lands and is Anwar's grandfather and Rhonda's uncle.

- Applied cultural activities such as: fishing, hunting, gathering or preparing bush food; providing tourism services; providing health services; making medicine or cosmetics; making Yolngu design.¹⁶

Figure 2: Cultural-economic activities in East Arnhem Land



The most common cultural economic activity for which practitioners are currently earning income is making Yolngu arts and crafts, highlighting the significant role that the visual arts industry plays in the economy of the region. Of those cultural practitioners who have ever been involved in making art and craft, 81% are currently engaged in it, and 88% of those are currently earning income from it. Around half of visual artists would like to undertake more work.

Importantly, there is a significant pool of experienced art and cultural workers in East Arnhem Land who are currently not engaged in work. This is particularly true for Yolngu music composers, writers and storytellers; film, tv or radio program makers; and designers – more than half of the Yolngu with experience in these activities are currently not engaged in them.¹⁷

¹⁶ Throsby D & Petetskaya E 2015, *Remote Indigenous Cultural Practitioners in East Arnhem Land*. Macquarie economic research papers. [PDF](#).

¹⁷ Throsby D & Petetskaya E 2015, *Remote Indigenous Cultural Practitioners in East Arnhem Land*. Macquarie economic research papers. [PDF](#).

There is an opportunity through the Indigenous Tourism Fund to invest in these cultural capabilities and in cultural hubs that leverage and optimise this asset base. Investing in skills and training in these industries will create culturally relevant career pathways and skilled personnel to stimulate micro-economies and support strengths, innovation and opportunities across the tourism sector and economy.

Development of regional and remote community niche market opportunities

Where there is clearly a demand for First Nations tourism, large volume and mass tourism can mean engagement with communities is superficial and can be environmentally and culturally harmful. Investment in small First Nations-led business initiatives focussed on tours or experiences for smaller groups of visitors can develop niche markets for tourists, providing employment opportunities in a framework that safeguards the local culture.¹⁸ Funding for skills development around managing small community/family-based businesses along with what Throsby and Petetskaya identify as ‘a well-planned and adequately funded strategy’ could see these niche market opportunities increase tourism and develop a new source of income for regional and remote communities.

In addition to the creation of cultural work, there are also employment opportunities in cultural maintenance roles such as in interpreting and cross-cultural consultation. These roles should be adequately remunerated, as on a local level these roles are regularly provided for by artists on an unpaid basis.¹⁹ Organisations that support rangers are examples of similar models that could be adapted for the cultural tourism sector, however levels of funding would need to be similarly appropriate for the cultural tourism sector to develop at the same scale.

Indigenous art worker support delivered through the Department of Communications and the Arts’ Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support (IVAIS) program also provides a model that could be leveraged and expanded to a broader range of arts and cultural organisations to support cultural tourism. This support enables employment of Indigenous art workers, on community, who assist with the day to day running of their art centres, including engagement with tourists and others.

Strategic partnerships provide opportunities for brand alignment and to access new audiences in an authentic way. Community, public and private partnerships increase opportunities and leverage resources and expertise. Arts and culture peak bodies (such as Ananguku Arts, Aboriginal Art Centre Hub of Western Australia, Desert, Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair Foundation, Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, Gab Titui, the Indigenous Art Centre Alliance, the Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists, Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre and the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association

¹⁸ Throsby C & Petetskaya K 2019, *Integrating Art Production and Economic Development in the Central Desert (NT) and the APY Lands (SA)*: National Survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists. Macquarie University, pg 90.

¹⁹ Throsby C & Petetskaya K 2019, *Integrating Art Production and Economic Development in the Central Desert (NT) and the APY Lands (SA)*: National Survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists. Macquarie University, pg 90.

for example) are key organisations to develop public and private sector engagement with cultural tourism.

Expanding capital, project-based and operational support to art centres

For many remote communities, arts and cultural production has the potential to be one of the most important means for providing a viable and culturally-relevant livelihood for members of the community.²⁰ Regional and remote Australia is home to around 90 remote art centres and the heart of Australia's world-famous visual art movement. Almost one in ten First Nations people in remote Australia receive income from First Nations arts (8.8%), compared to 2.9% in regional Australia and 2.8% in major cities.²¹ Art production is the main source of commercial income for many remote communities with art centres.²²

Art centres play a vital role in Indigenous arts economies in remote locations and in supporting tourism. However, they generally receive base-level funding that is focussed on art production and marketing, with a high expectation that they will make significant fine art sales to contribute to their operations. This arts-focussed money does not support the multitude of roles arts centres have the potential to play within communities, including in relation to tourism, health and wellbeing, community cohesion, cultural maintenance and all facets of Closing the Gap. Most art centres have received comparatively small amounts of operational funding when compared to many other community-based health and welfare organisations funded by Closing the Gap programs.²³

The financial circumstances of many art centres are fragile. Most art centres are micro-enterprises; in 2018–19 of the 68 remote and very remote IVAIS funded art centres, 51% had total sales of less than \$250,000 and 35% generated under \$150,000 in annual sales. They generated \$28.4 million in art sales against \$11.8 million in IVAIS funding (or 29%). As with most other visual arts organisations globally, all of these art centres rely on funding to contribute to their operations.²⁴

The majority of funding for art centres nationally is provided through the Department of Communications and the Arts' IVAIS program.²⁵ While eligible for support through the IVAIS program, project-based and capital works activities are of lower priority in the context of consistently high demand for operational funding.²⁶

²⁰ Throsby C & Petetskaya K 2019, *Integrating Art Production and Economic Development in the Central Desert (NT) and the APY Lands (SA)*: National Survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists. Macquarie University.

²¹ Australia Council 2017, *Living Culture: First Nations arts participation and wellbeing*. Based on ABS data.

²² Woodhead A and Acker T 2014, *The Art Economies Value Chain reports: Synthesis*, CRCREP Research Report CR004, Ninti One Limited, Alice Springs.

²³ Congreve S 2017. *Summary - The enabling environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art centres*. Ninti One Limited. Alice Springs. [PDF](#) 0.6MB.

²⁴ Department of Communications and the Arts.

²⁵ At the jurisdictional level, Queensland and the Torres Strait Islands are an exception to this, with the Queensland Government making a significant contribution through its Backing Indigenous Arts (BIA) program.

²⁶ Department of Communications and the Arts, Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support – program guidelines.

There is an opportunity through the Indigenous Tourism Fund to leverage this support with funding for project-based and capital works activities as well as operational funding which will enable art centres to capitalise on tourism opportunities, innovate and collaborate in product diversification, and facilitate stronger linkages between art centres, commercial galleries and the tourism market.

There is also an opportunity to leverage the Northern Territory Government's significant investment in cultural assets across the Northern Territory through the Territory Arts Trail, which is providing better infrastructure for cultural tourism in the NT and increasing the accessibility and visibility of Indigenous arts centres. There is an opportunity for the Indigenous Tourism Fund to value-add to the Territory Arts Trail and to invest in similar stimulus grants,²⁷ infrastructure projects²⁸ and promotional campaigns²⁹ nationally. Support for First Nations performing arts infrastructure and cultural hubs.

Arts and cultural practitioners undertake a variety of roles in remote communities (see figure 2). Macquarie University's series of surveys of remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists found that in regional and remote locations there is untapped potential for artists working in music, film-making and performance, and that these art forms could benefit from similar infrastructure to art centres.

Almost 60% of respondents in the Central Desert and the APY lands felt that facilities such as community centres and venues in their community at present were not enough to support more artistic activity.³⁰ There is an opportunity for the Indigenous Tourism Fund to invest in capital works projects to support the development of First Nations performing arts programming and presentation and cultural hubs in regional and remote Australia.

Funding for participation in performing arts markets and showcases

First Nations performing arts are underrepresented in Australia. As part of the Australia Council's *Showcasing Creativity* research, we undertook a national scan of the programs of 135 Australian presenters in 2015 and found that First Nations performing arts comprised around 2% of the almost 6,000 works programmed in 2015 seasons.³¹

One of the most common ways that presenters find out about First Nations performing art works is through showcases, such as the Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM),

²⁷ Since early 2017, the Arts Trail Regional Stimulus Grants have provided more than \$3.2 million for 50 projects that enhance arts and cultural facilities across the Territory for the benefit of artists and visitors. See: Lauren Moss, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Culture, [Investing in Our Regions – Arts Trail Regional Stimulus Grants](#). Media release 9 April 2019.

²⁸ See: Northern Territory Government 2019, *About the Arts Trail: Arts Trail connecting the whole Northern Territory*. Viewed 22 November 2019 at <https://creativeeconomy.nt.gov.au/about-arts-trail>

²⁹ See: Lauren Moss, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Culture, [Turbocharged Territory Art Campaign to Boost Tourism](#). Media release 4 February 2019.

³⁰ Throsby C & Petetskaya K 2019, [Integrating Art Production and Economic Development in the Central Desert \(NT\) and the APY Lands \(SA\)](#): National Survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists. Macquarie University, pg 79.

³¹ Australia Council for the Arts 2016, [Showcasing Creativity: programming and presenting First Nations arts](#).

Performing Arts Connections Australia's Performing Arts Exchange (PAX), Long Paddock or state-based showcases (59%).³²

There is an opportunity through the fund to support attendance at showcases such as these both domestically and internationally. Building sector capacity for First Nations performing artists to connect to presenters through showcases and networks is critical to growing the presentation of First-Nations works and the available cultural tourism opportunities associated with this work.

Supporting the development of marketing skills for First Nations arts workers

To capitalise on tourism opportunities, there is also a need to develop marketing skills in the First Nations arts sector. This includes training in the marketing frameworks that are used in the mainstream arts sector, such as market segmentation, target marketing, branding and marketing communication. There is a recognised need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts workers to be equipped with the same marketing skills.³³

Investing in large-scale art events, art fairs and festivals

Festivals, art fairs and large-scale events support tourism and access to new audiences for First Nations artists. *The New York Times* recognised the Top End of Australia as a place to visit in 2018, specifically referencing the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair as a drawcard.³⁴ Research in 2016 by Tod Jones, Jessica Booth and Tim Acker of Curtin University found Indigenous art fairs are more important than galleries in the economic success of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts market. The research concludes that: 'participation in art fairs has been driven by the meaningful engagement of relational goods that afford audiences an "embedded" consumption experience—assuaging provenance concerns and creating rich, memorable experiences built on interpersonal exchanges and exposure to cultural practices and representations'.³⁵

Attendance at festivals, fairs and cultural events is the fastest growing arts activity among international tourists, increasing by 61% from 643,000 attendees in 2013 to over one million in 2017. Attendance increased for arts tourists regardless of whether they visited metropolitan or regional areas of Australia.³⁶

Large scale arts events and festivals can attract tourists across vast distances to remote areas, as the Stompem Ground Festival did, drawing thousands of revellers to Broome during NAIDOC week in 1992, 1998, 2000 and 2002. The festival featured artists such as Warumpi Band, Midnight Oil, Yothu Yindi, Archie Roach and the Pigram Brothers. First Nations owned and led, the festival made the remote coastal town feel like 'the centre of the

³² Australia Council for the Arts 2016, [Showcasing Creativity: programming and presenting First Nations arts](#).

³³ Australia Council 2015, [Building Audiences: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts](#).

³⁴ Darwin is at number 12 in the list. *New York Times*, [52 Places to Visit in 2018](#).

³⁵ Tod Jones, Jessica Booth & Tim Acker (2016) [The Changing Business of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art: Markets, Audiences, Artists, and the Large Art Fairs](#), *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*, 46:3, 107-121, DOI: 10.1080/10632921.2016.1182953

³⁶ Australia Council 2018, [International Arts Tourism: Connecting cultures](#). Based on Tourism Research Australia's International Visitor Survey.

Australian music industry'.³⁷ An event such as this provides a drawcard to bring visitors to remote regions such as the Kimberley. Once there, visitors will look to explore the range of opportunities and experiences available to them, providing tourism opportunities for First Nations arts and culture organisations in the region such as the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre (KALACC).

Ownership and authenticity

Within First Nations tourism it is essential to find the balance between creation, distribution and access, and the care of cultural heritage and the rights of creators. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation research highlights that self-determination and the engagement of local communities is essential for the growth of cultural tourism. It warns that 'if poorly managed, tourism can also cause negative impacts on culture and heritage, thus inherently damaging the long term sustainability of both the tourism and cultural sectors'.³⁸ The challenge is in ensuring that commercial opportunities and viability are managed with respect to culture and self-determination, and respect for First Nations peoples as the owners of their culture and the people best placed to present authentic experiences with integrity.

Income from art sales is vital to the livelihoods of First Nations artists and their communities. The rising profile of First Nations art has driven the creation of fake and imitation arts and in particular, souvenirs which look and feel authentic but have no connections to First Nations culture. Fake art and souvenirs are marketed to tourists who do not know or do not understand the harm to First Nations communities that purchasing inauthentic products creates. The [Indigenous Art Code](#) advocates for ethical trading in First Nations art and the [Fake Art Harms Culture](#) campaign aims to stop the production and sale of imitation art.

It will be important to ensure that the Indigenous Tourism Fund has measures in place to ensure that funding is provided to ethical businesses including working with the Indigenous Art Code, and prioritising support for First Nations-led arts and culture enterprises and organisations. Regulatory measures are needed to prevent the sale of fake Indigenous art products,³⁹ and the fund provides an opportunity to support and promote best practice in the tourism and souvenir industry.

IVAIS funding for art centres is targeted to support the production and marketing of fine art, however art centres are also significant producers of authentic products for the tourist market. To gauge the extent to which artists and art centres in remote Indigenous communities are designing, developing and marketing products, information was sought in 2018 from art centres supported through the IVAIS program. Products were defined as items reproduced in multiples to sell at the lower-price point, generally in the tourist market.

Of the 79 art centres approached, 61 responded and 43 of these have products such as giftware, jewellery, cushion covers, clothing, crockery, kitchenware and stationary. These are

³⁷ ABC 2018, [Remembering the Stompem Ground festival](#), 10 July 2018.

³⁸ World Tourism Organization (2018), [Tourism and Culture Synergies](#), UNWTO, Madrid, pg 15.

³⁹ See Australia Council's submission to the Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs Inquiry into the Proliferation of Inauthentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 'Style' art and craft products, 2017. [PDF](#).

made at the art centre or through a third party. Almost 40% of organisations with products distribute these themselves, and the majority are sold in the Australian market.

Most organisations that have products are interested in continuing or building this aspect of their business. The reasons cited for having products ranged across promotional opportunities, diversifying income, meeting tourist and other demand at a lower price point, skills development for artists and staff, as well as self-sustaining youth engagement activities.

Most of the art centres with products are interested in continuing or building this component of their business. Reasons cited for not having products, or not building this component, were lack of staff and other resourcing, difficulty of upscaling, lack of information about product research and development, licensing, wholesaling and how to connect with a new market.⁴⁰ These reasons present investment opportunities for the Indigenous Tourism Fund to grow the availability of ethical products for the tourist market.

Considerations for the Indigenous Tourism Fund

With cultural tourism set to be a key market, it is crucial that First Nations cultural tourism is supported in a sustainable and respectful way. Key considerations for the fund include:

- **Investment in First Nations arts and cultural expression as a priority area.** Funding for First Nations culture made up 1% of total direct government expenditure for Indigenous Australians in 2015–16.⁴¹ Without the development of artists and cultural workers in this space, First Nations tourism will not be sustainable.
- **Supporting intergenerational cultural transfer.** The Australia Council's Chosen program is an example of a culturally based program and self-determination in program design and delivery that empowers First Nations communities to take control and plan for how they will nurture younger people from their community in the arts and/or culture. There is an opportunity for the fund to partner with the Australia Council to offer funding for community-led cultural apprenticeships and residencies in arts and culture enterprises or organisations that are working in the tourism sector.
- **Investing in First Nations labour force development** to create skilled personnel and career pathways at a local level to stimulate regional micro-economies.
- **Investing in niche market opportunities and development of small businesses as well as large scale events in regional and remote Australia.** Investing in skills development specific to running small tourist business and providing small group art experiences, as well as large scale events that can attract tourists to regional and remote areas.

⁴⁰ Department of Communications and the Arts.

⁴¹ Based on Productivity Commission 2017, Indigenous Expenditure Report 2017 Advanced Database, accessed 2/2/18 from <https://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/indigenous-expenditure-report/2017>

- **Expanded funding for art centres and investment in similar infrastructure for performing arts.** Reflecting on the vital role they currently play and ensuring ongoing support and expansion.
- **Ensuring people are paid properly for supporting activities** such as translation and interpreting, cross-cultural consulting, and providing cultural tourism services to visitors.
- **Supporting community, public, private partnerships** for example working with First Nations arts and culture peak bodies and First Nations-led arts and culture organisations.
- **Measures within the fund to prevent the sale of fake Indigenous art products** and to support and promote best practice and ethical trading, including working with the Indigenous Art Code and investing in art centres to grow the availability of ethical products for the tourist market.