

ACT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ARTS CONSULTATION REPORT AND ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

SNAP SHOT: WHAT WE HEARD
WHAT WE WILL DO



ACT
Government

CHIEF MINISTER, TREASURY AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTORATE

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WHAT WE HEARD

The arts keep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures strong. They tell the story of our city, region and nation.

Using their own words, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the arts have a vital, huge, pivotal, central and essential role in helping unique cultures and communities to thrive.

Throughout our recent consultation, artsACT learned a lot about different kinds of arts practices. We heard stories of family, of song lines and country, of success and of resilience, from strong leaders and many talented artists¹. We heard how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists make art, what it means and why it is important.

The purpose of **ACT and Torres Strait Islander Arts Consultation Report** is to reflect the views of ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists about the role of the arts in the community and its strengths. The report also identifies the most important areas for support. **ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Consultation and Action Plan** considers how artsACT can improve services for ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts communities. It aims to ensure equal access to programs, services and facilities for all people.

The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Consultation and Action Plan will help inform targeted programs for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

A new allocation of \$100,000 per year to the sector through the 2016/2017 budget and beyond will support new initiatives.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, the arts are inseparable from culture.

¹ The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Consultation Report uses the term artist to unilaterally describe people making art across art forms and includes but is not limited to writers,

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been using the arts for tens of thousands of years to tell their stories, to understand and care for their environment. The arts help people to develop, reconnect with and pass on their rich cultures to the next generation. ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists use the arts to express their individual perspectives, heritage and contemporary experiences.

Arts practices may incorporate many art forms, happen in groups or individually. They are a way of sharing and developing knowledge. Arts practices tell the story of an interconnected understanding of the world inseparable from ideas about history, land management practices, law and kinship and all aspects of knowledge, spirituality and identity.

Emerging priorities from the consultation included the importance of engaging young people through arts activities. Exploring traditional themes through new art forms is an exciting opportunity for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and young people. Many artists emphasised the importance of ‘passing on’ and sharing arts skills and knowledge to the next generation of young people. This sharing of skills is a part of cultural responsibility and fundamental to a sense of well-being.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, making artwork has a real effect on emotional and social well-being. For some artists, art practice is a form of spiritual and emotional healing and is a powerful way of reconnecting with culture. Participation is a way to understand who you are and where you belong.

visual arts and crafts practitioners, musicians, dancers, theatre practitioners and those working across art forms and in new media

Engaging in arts activities is a source of pride and importantly strengthens community and family ties. For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples a sense of individual well-being depends on that of wider family and community groups. This is reflective of the high value placed on these social structures.

We have heard that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists are interested in projects arising from strengths and initiatives coming from their own communities. They would like to participate in activities that help build skills and ability across a range of areas. They emphasised the need to identify the right people at the right stage in their practice, those ready to take the next steps.

Further support in the areas of business and artistic development are a priority for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Future programs may include new tailored programs for arts business development and mentorships to support artistic development. Any new programs need to respect culture. They also need to consider the different needs and stages of practice of artists.

Consultation also emphasised that supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to connect with the broader arts community, particularly ACT Government funded arts organisations is important. Connecting with these organisations will increase opportunities for the sector and support artistic development. Assisting non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific organisations to improve diversity and cultural

awareness is also part of the ACT Government's role in ensuring accessibility for all members of the ACT Community.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts should be celebrated within the broader ACT Community. They strongly contribute to the identity and vibrancy of our city.

artsACT has a role in promoting local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts activities. We will review our communications strategies and grants programs. This will help to get the word out to communities to make sure people know what is happening and how they can be a part of it.

Ongoing engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts communities needs to respect culture. artsACT is committed to providing a framework for decision making for the community, by the community.

Establishing an **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Network** to guide us in future program and policy development processes will allow us to work together with the community to develop culturally appropriate policy, programs and future activities responding to the **Action Plan**.

artsACT wishes to thank all participants for sharing their time and ideas. **The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Consultation** does not mark the end of the consultation period. It is the beginning of an ongoing conversation and continued efforts to build trust with community in culturally appropriate ways. The door is open for more listening, learning and understanding.

OUR OUTCOMES

artsACT has listened to the views provided through the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts consultation process.

The five main desired outcomes identified in the consultations with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts community as priority areas are:

- **Respect culture through engagement**
- **Support artistic development**
- **Support business development**
- **Promote local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts**
- **Improve access**

The actions below address the desired outcomes arising from the consultation report. A table aligning the actions with these key themes is included in this document.

It also aims to set out a basis for respectful engagement and promote participatory policy and program development to support self-determination and to inform future activities and opportunities for artsACT to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts communities.

WHAT WE WILL DO

artsACT has listened to the views provided through the consultation process and will work closely with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture communities in the ACT to take the first steps towards improving the recognition and status of this important part of the Territory's identity, history and future.

artsACT will:

- Establish an ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Network, to support self-determination and leadership within the sector and provide direct advice and input to artsACT about arts activities.
- Enhance the level of cultural awareness in the ACT arts sector, by working with ACT Government funded arts organisations to ensure an appropriate level of cultural awareness training, improve communication and diversify programming, boards and staff.
- Develop an artsACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Communications Plan, which will include the promotion of local ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture activities through artsACT and VisitCanberra communication channels.
- Review artsACT arts funding processes with a focus on accessibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.
- Investigate options for an identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Officer within artsACT.

- Co-ordinate centralised communications and program information through the ACT Government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Online Portal.
- Keep listening; Continue direct relationship building activities with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts community.

artsACT will work with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Network to:

- Create culturally appropriate and focussed business development programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.
- Create partnership opportunities across ACT Government agencies and events, tertiary education institutions and national cultural organisations.
- Explore and support the infrastructure needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts communities.
- Develop and support programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, including mentorships, cultural reconnection activities and activities focused on young people.
- Broker relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and ACT Government funded arts organisations.
- Provide support to community driven projects, strengths and assets.
- Understand the unique role of the traditional custodians as integral to the identity of the ACT and support and promote their arts and culture through support for new activities.
- Showcase local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts in the ACT by providing opportunities through events and other activities

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Each 12 months following the release of the action plan, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Network and artsACT will review these priorities and artsACT will report to the Minister for the Arts on the implementation and progress of the Actions listed here.

OUTCOMES AND ACTIONS TABLE

	RESPECT CULTURE THROUGH ENGAGEMENT	SUPPORT ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT	SUPPORT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	PROMOTE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ARTS	IMPROVE ACCESS
SHORT-TERM 6 TO 12 MONTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep listening, continue direct relationship building activities with ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts communities. Establish an ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Network, to support self-determination and leadership within the sector and provide direct advice and input to the ArtsACT about arts activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide support to community driven projects, strengths and assets. Understand the unique role of the traditional custodians as integral to the identity of the ACT and support and promote their arts and culture through support to new activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create culturally appropriate and focused business development programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Communications Plan, which will include the promotion of local ACT arts and culture activities through artsACT and VisitCanberra communication channels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review arts ACT arts funding processes with a focus on accessibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists Co-ordinate centralised communications and program information through the ACT Government’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Online Portal.
MEDIUM-TERM 12 TO 24 MONTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep listening, continue direct relationship building activities with ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts communities. Provide ongoing Secretariat support to an ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Network. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and support programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, including mentorships, cultural reconnection activities and activities focused on young people. Broker relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and ACT Government funded arts organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create partnership opportunities across ACT Government agencies and events, tertiary education institutions and national cultural organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showcase local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts in the ACT by providing opportunities through events and other activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the level of cultural awareness in the ACT arts sector, by working with ACT Government funded arts organisations to ensure an appropriate level of training, communication, programming and inclusion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and artists
LONG-TERM 24 TO 48 MONTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep listening, continue direct relationship building activities with ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts communities. Review and evaluate work of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore and support the infrastructure needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts communities. Continue to identify artistic development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. Review and evaluate artistic development programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to identify business development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. Review and evaluate business development programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to identify opportunities for the promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. Review and evaluate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Communications Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate options for an identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander officer within ArtsACT.