

ACT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ARTS CONSULTATION

ACTION PLAN



ACT
Government

artsACT
CHIEF MINISTER, TREASURY AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTORATE

2017

INTRODUCTION

To inform the development of the ACT Arts Policy in 2015, the ACT Government undertook a broad community consultation process. During this process we identified a need to better understand and work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in relation to arts and culture. In response the ACT Government developed a central Principle in the ACT Arts Policy ‘to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultures.’

In 2016, artsACT undertook an extensive listening exercise with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists¹, arts groups and arts organisations in the ACT, to better understand how we could work with community to implement this principle as a priority. The result of this listening process is the ‘ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Consultation Report.’

This Action Plan responds to priorities heard during the consultation and outlines the actions the government will take to improve services to ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Communities. The Action Plan will inform targeted new funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, through a new allocation of \$100,000 to the sector per year through the 2016-17 ACT Budget and beyond.

Through the recent consultation process, the ACT Government has heard that it is essential that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture is recognised in culturally appropriate ways and specifically driven by the unique and self-determined needs of this sector.

We heard that for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, the arts are inseparable from culture. This is true of all artists in all cultures, but is particularly significant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. They have been using the arts for tens of thousands of years to tell their stories, to understand and care for their environment, and to develop, reconnect with and pass on their rich cultures. ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists use the arts to express their individual perspectives, heritage and contemporary experiences and should be celebrated and promoted within the broader ACT Community.

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

¹ The ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Consultation Report uses the term artist to describe people making art across art forms and includes but is not limited to writers, visual arts and crafts practitioners, musicians, dancers, theatre practitioners and those working across art forms and in new media.

Engagement with the arts has a genuine effect on emotional and social well-being for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. For some artists, their art practice is a form of spiritual and emotional healing and may be a powerful way of reconnecting with culture and overcoming dislocation.

Engagement with the arts is a source of pride and critically, strengthens community and family ties. This is a priority given the cultural significance of community, family and collective wellbeing which for many is valued above notions of the individual.

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 outcomes is included in this document.

The Action Plan will inform future activities, aims to set out a basis for respectful engagement and promotes participatory policy and program development to support self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

ACTIONS

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 ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts communities.

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 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 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 artsACT 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.



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