

National Cultural Policy Submission

1470123

Public

Organisation

Mara Art Aboriginal Corporation - Yamaji Art

Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Established in the late 1990's Yamaji Art is the Midwest of Western Australia's longest operating Aboriginal Art Centres. Located in the seaside town of Geraldton, Yamaji Art service artist in Geraldton and provide outreach support to Dongara, Northampton and Mullewa.

Yamaji Art has continued to expand our reach and impact despite not having any significant increase in our recurring IVAIS funding. The level of funding investment through the program has not kept pace with industry demand, inflation, organisational strategic direction or the increasing external demands placed upon us as a small organisation. For the larger part of two decades Yamaji Art have operated with 2 staff, only recently expanding to 4.5FTE through IVAIS project funding.

One of the key issues Yamaji Art has identified, is the increasing reliance on short-term project funding to sustain core operational activities and staffing. While project based investment enables the delivery of important cultural programs, exhibitions and community initiatives, Yamaji Art are then expected to self fund these initiatives once project funds cease. This creates an unsustainable cycle whereby Yamaji Art must continually seek project grants to maintain staffing and project outcomes. Effectively being forced to 'stop-start' repeatedly which leads to difficulty in imbedding roles and outcomes that support organisational growth.

Any review of the IVAIS program should recognise these successful projects by redirecting the awarded 'competitive' funds to the Art Centres recurring funding, rather than continuing to have to re-apply. Furthermore, the administrative burden on Art Centres to service IVAIS funding impacts overall sustainability and confidence in forward planning. Yamaji Art supports an increase of the IVAIS operational funding from 3 to 10 year cycle to mitigate operational precarity.

The IVAIS program should also consider the implementation of an equitable funding matrix when allocating recurring operational investment to Aboriginal Art Centres.

Current funding models can inadvertently favour larger Art Centres who have diverse ranges of revenue such as mining royalties, higher art sales and philanthropic investment compared to smaller ones who require a higher level of financial support to grow.

Smaller art centres operate with limited resources despite delivering substantial cultural, social and economic outcomes. An equity based framework would allow for organisational growth and expansion. An equitable funding approach will also recognise differing levels of need and disadvantage to support fair and sustainable growth across all art centres.

A strengthened cultural policy framework should therefore move beyond short term project outcomes and recognise the critical role that stable operational investment plays in maintaining a healthy and resilient art centre. Long-term sustainability will require funding models that support long term growth and expansion over short term project based initiatives.