

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Individual

John Armstrong



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

- I was General Manager of Mirndiyan Gununa Aboriginal Corporation (MGAC) from 2018 to 2025.
- During this time I became part of the network of Indigenous Art Centres (IACs) in FNQ and understand that we all share very similar challenges in our daily efforts to maintain and transmit Culture.
- MGAC is the arts and culture organisation on Mornington Island and has programs of visual arts and crafts, dance, song, language, and story.
- As with most Art Centres, MGAC is housed in a fairly ramshackle collection of buildings that have been added to and adapted over decades – none of the buildings were designed for purpose and none of the buildings are climate sensitive and all of the buildings impact directly on the creative activities that are so vital in remote communities.
- MGAC receives operational and worker funding from IVAIS and program funding from AQ – neither stream allow for any capital works or even repairs (that must be funded from self-generated funds – that is from the sale of art works).
- MGAC participated in CIAF and DAAF every year I was Manager – not once did sales cover the costs of registration, freight, air fares, accommodation, and workers' wages – they are really nice events but a new model must be developed whereby it is not IACs that are supporting Art Fairs but Art Fairs that are supporting IACs. A genuine connection to markets is imperative from Art Fairs – IACs work in the lowest SEIFA decile communities in the country and any expenditure from a budget means less support for artists.
- It is imperative that IACs be recognised for the cultural, economic, and social roles they fulfill and be funded accordingly – that means:
 - o Proper facilities that are climate sensitive
 - o Proper facilities that are codesigned with the users
 - o Proper facilities that are safe workplaces
 - o Proper facilities that show respect to the artists and workers
 - o Proper facilities that recognise the incredible importance of these painted, danced, sung, and told, stories for Australia
- In remote communities everything is harder than elsewhere and most times much more expensive than elsewhere. Energy and connectivity outages are almost daily occurrences directly impacting on activities and safety and make running a sustainable business a real challenge. On Mornington Island, Australia Post has just closed the Post Office – this is the only way that artworks can be sent to buyers off island and adds yet another drama on top of all the other dramas!
- It is imperative that formal government assistance and support be given to IACs for international opportunities – nationally most IACs are OK – Queensland Indigenous Arts Marketing & Export Agency (QIAMEA) was established in 2003 and achieved some marvellous results before it was ended in the 2010s.
- Attraction and retention of local art workers and their upskilling is resource intensive and training programs that include online modules and practicums are needed as a matter of urgency.