

Submission to the National Cultural Policy 2026

Public Consultation

Pillar 1: First Nations First

Cultural production, livelihoods and the long-term sustainability of the remote First Nations art sector

Submitted by

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Based on findings from:

*National Survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists: Cultural Production,
Livelihoods and Economic Sustainability (forthcoming),*

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Executive summary

This submission addresses *Pillar 1: First Nations First* of the next National Cultural Policy. It is made by Katya Petetskaya with Professor David Throsby AO, co-authors of the forthcoming *National Survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists: Cultural Production, Livelihoods and Economic Sustainability*, a national economic study of First Nations artistic and cultural production across six remote regions of Australia.

It is a national survey of more than 700 practising First Nations artists in remote areas of Australia working in visual art, performing art, composing, writing, film and media. The six regional reports have already been published, the national report is in preparation. In combination, these will contain the most comprehensive evidence on the working lives and economic conditions of remote First Nations artists at the individual level.

This submission has been created to provide a range of evidence to inform Pillar 1 policy development. Where our evidence supports sector calls to action, we attempt to give that evidence its quantitative backbone, but ultimate priorities will be determined by the First Nations leaders.

Based on our survey data, we put forward the principle for consideration for Pillar 1: *cultural production is primary; economic outcomes follow from cultural strength*. In remote First Nations communities, cultural and artistic practice is not a sub-category of economic development: it is the means through which knowledge, country, language and community life are sustained. The income, employment and economic flows that arise from artistic practice are consequences of that cultural strength; though they may in turn contribute to sustaining it. Policies that characterize remote Indigenous arts mainly as economic development can be misaligned with how the industry currently operates.

The available data suggest that the industry stands on two foundations:

The **institutional** infrastructure of Indigenous corporations and not-for-profit organisations in remote Australia. Art centres, for example, mediate 89% of visual arts engagement, manage 75% of artists, host nearly half of all artists as their primary workspace and provide the bridge between cultural practice and the wider economy.

The **cultural and social capital** of senior artists who teach cultural knowledge and artistic skills through family and community learning pathways: the educational pathway by which 98% of artists acquire cultural knowledge and 78% acquire artistic skills.

If either foundation fails, the sector hollows out. Policy that secures both would protect the future of the sector.

This submission identifies **four areas of policy attention** for the next National Cultural Policy:

- Stable, indexed recurrent operational funding for art centres and other Indigenous corporations in remote communities which accurately reflects the cost of supporting artistic practice in remote settings.

- Workforce development models that recognise family and community-based learning and which are supported by a formal paid framework for artistic and cultural transmission.
- Recognition and remuneration of unpaid cultural labour, within the broader context of portfolio-based artistic livelihoods.
- A shift from a project-to-project framework of funding to recurrent funding and recognising the synergies between art centres, ranger programs, language centres and cultural centres.

These proposed areas of policy attention draw on the substantial Pillar 1 initiatives under *Revive*, including the establishment of the First Nations Board within Creative Australia, the implementation funding of up to \$52 million over four years from 2024–25 announced through the Creative Australia Amendment (Implementation of Revive) Bill 2024, the continuation of the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support (IVAIS) program and the development of the First Nations Creative Workforce Development Strategy.

1. About this submission

Professor David Throsby AO is Distinguished Professor of Economics at Macquarie University and is internationally recognised for his work in the economics of the arts and culture. Katya Petetskaya is a researcher in cultural economics and Research Project Director at the Department of Economics, Macquarie Business School.

The research comprises six regional surveys covering principal regions of remote First Nations artistic practice:

- Region 1: Kimberley, Western Australia
- Region 2: East and West Arnhem Land, Northern Territory
- Region 3: North-West NT and Tiwi Islands
- Region 4: Central Desert, NT and APY Lands, South Australia
- Region 5: Pilbara and Ngaanyatjarra Lands, Western Australia
- Region 6: Far North Queensland

The six regional reports have now been published. A consolidated national report drawing on the combined database is currently in preparation.

The survey methodology is consistent across regions, enabling direct comparisons and aggregate national analysis. Together with the National Artists Survey, which has tracked the careers of Australian professional artists for more than four decades, these surveys provide the longest-running and most comprehensive evidence base on artistic livelihoods in Australia. The data discussed in this submission draw on more than 700 respondents across the six regions.

This submission is grounded in the survey findings. It addresses Pillar 1 directly through four areas of policy attention, each supported by specific evidence from the regional reports and the consolidated national analysis. This submission was prepared by Katya Petetskaya, drawing on the joint research

with Professor David Throsby AO. The submission's analysis and policy directions have been discussed with and supported in principle by Professor Throsby.

2. Pillar 1: framing and positionality

The consultation paper restates *Revive's* recognition of First Nations cultures as Australia's "oldest continuing heritage and a defining source of cultural strength." Pillar 1 calls for cultural policy that continues to "reflect First Nations priorities, strengthen recognition of cultural rights, recognise the centrality of language to culture, and support pathways for First Nations leadership across the cultural landscape."

This submission draws on our research to make two points relevant to developing this Pillar 1.

Cultural production must come first, the economic flow follows cultural strength. The survey data show that 84% of remote First Nations artists engage in arts and cultural activities for personal enjoyment, 62% to keep culture strong and 61% to share culture with others. By comparison, 45% cite earning income as a reason for engagement. Our data on cultural-economic activities also reinforce this: on average artists in remote communities are engaged in six concurrent activities, such as visual or performing arts production, teaching, caring for country, cultural governance, ceremony, cross-cultural consulting and translation and others. However, only two or three of these activities generate any direct income. The sector is a cultural and community system that produces economic outcomes as a consequence of its cultural strength. Policy that inverts that relationship, by treating cultural practice instrumentally as a sole means to economic development, will misalign with the way the sector actually operates and will tend to misallocate resources accordingly.

This submission is an evidence contribution; First Nations leadership determines policy direction. Our role as researchers is to document the economic conditions of remote First Nations artistic practice in remote Australia and to make that evidence available to policy development. The submission identifies policy directions that the data support; whether and how those directions are pursued is properly a matter for First Nations leadership, through the First Nations Board within Creative Australia, peak bodies including Desart, ANKA, IACA, Ku Arts and others and First Nations community organisations across Australia.

3. The sector at a glance: the two foundations and the working lives of artists

The two-foundation framing: (1) institutional and (2) cultural and social capital, emerges directly from the data.

The portfolio of cultural-economic activity. Remote First Nations artists are deeply engaged across a broad spectrum of cultural and creative activity. On average, an artist has engaged in eight different cultural-economic activities over the course of their working life, six of which they are currently active in. These extend well beyond artmaking to include teaching others in arts and culture (66% currently active), caring for country (76%), participation in ceremonies (49%), interpreting and cross-cultural

consulting (35%), board and governance roles (32%), arts administration (22%) and cultural tourism services (27%). Of the six activities in which the average artist is currently engaged, only 2.6 produce any direct income. The gap between the breadth of work undertaken and the work that is remunerated is one of the most consistent findings of the study.

Time allocation. Despite the breadth of activity, artists' working lives are also time-intensive. Among visual artists currently engaged in visual arts, 75% work two or more full days per week on this activity, with 38% working four or five days. Across all cultural and creative activities combined, artists devote the equivalent of a full-time working week. Notably, the time devoted to cultural responsibilities (teaching, caring for country, cultural governance, ceremony) marginally exceeds time devoted to direct creative production.

Income. Artists' incomes are modest. Mean creative income across the full survey population is \$8,900 per annum, with a median of \$3,500. When all sources are combined, including creative work, other cultural work, non-cultural work and non-work income, such as government benefits and family transfers, mean total gross income is \$32,300, with a median of \$26,900. By comparison, mean total gross income for Australian professional artists was \$54,500 in 2021/22 (see the 2024 *Artists as Workers* report). Almost half (48%) of artists in remote communities identify "other sources" as their main source of income. The composition of these income flows is important. About two-thirds (66%) of artists receive some form of government support. The largest categories are entitlements linked to age, disability, carer responsibilities or parenting (the Disability Support Pension, Age Pension, Parenting Payment and Carer Payment). About a quarter (26%) receive unemployment benefits (JobSeeker or Youth Allowance). A further 19% participate in Work for the Dole arrangements, requiring participants to perform work in exchange for unemployment support payments. This reflects the demographic composition of the artist population, which includes substantial numbers of senior cultural practitioners, artists living with disability or chronic illness and single parents (predominantly women in remote communities). At the same time, 76% of artists provide financial support to others, indicating that income flows operate within wider kinship and household networks rather than as individual entitlements.

The institutional foundation: Indigenous corporations and art centres. Indigenous corporations and other community-controlled not-for-profit organisations, most of which in the arts sector take the form of art centres in remote First Nations communities, constitute the central economic infrastructure of the sector. They are both the dominant organisational setting in which artists undertake their work and the dominant channel through which they are paid. These organisations mediate 89% of visual arts engagement, 78% of arts administration, 77% of board and governance work and substantial shares of cultural archiving (55%), cultural tourism (54%) and arts management (48%). They are also the principal source of artists' income across the cultural economy. Among artists paid for their work, Indigenous corporations or not-for-profit organisations such as art centres are the payment channel for 92% of visual artists, 85% of arts administrators, 82% of those in cultural governance, 71% of those in cultural archiving, 69% in cultural tourism, 67% in arts management and 64% of those paid for caring for country.

Art centres are the dominant source of industry support, particularly for visual artists. They manage 88% of remote visual artists nationally. Almost half (48%) of all artists (and 59% of visual artists) identify an art centre as their primary workspace. Art centres are also the principal channel through which artists access funding: only 2% of remote First Nations artists apply for funding independently and 45% do not apply at all. Artists' own evaluations confirm the central role of art centres: art-centre management is rated 4.87 out of 5 for individual career impact and 94% of artists agree (72% strongly agree) that having an art centre creates or could create jobs and incomes in their community.

The cultural and social capital foundation: senior artists. Half of remote First Nations artists are recognised as senior artists. The sector's workforce reproduces itself through family and community pathways: 98% of artists acquire cultural knowledge from family members and elders (89% identifying this as the most important pathway), and 78% acquire artistic skills through family-based learning. Only 10% identify vocational training as an important pathway for industry-skills acquisition and 4% hold a Bachelor's degree. 65% of artists are simultaneously learning and teaching, a dual role that reflects the embedded, ongoing character of cultural transmission.

Why both foundations matter. The institutional and the cultural and social capital foundations are interdependent. Art centres provide the organisational and economic infrastructure within which senior artists transmit knowledge to younger artists; senior artists provide the cultural authority and skill base on which art centres' viability ultimately rests. The data presented in the following sections show that both foundations operate under structural and demographic pressure and that policy settings that secure both are the most important long-run determinant of the sector's sustainability.

4. Area of policy attention 1: Art centres as central infrastructure of the remote First Nations art sector

In Section 3, art centres were identified as the largest industry source of support for Indigenous artists working in remote First Nations communities. They are correctly funded for the artistic production they support, but the significant amount of their work is also aimed at enabling artists' practice that is not currently funded, work that responds directly to the structural disadvantages many First Nations artists in remote areas encounter.

Artists whom art centres serve. Our survey data show that many remote First Nations artists belong to populations with additional support needs: senior cultural practitioners, artists living with disability or chronic illness and single parents (predominantly women in remote communities). The higher cost of living in remote Australia and the lower socioeconomic conditions of remote First Nations communities compound these disadvantages. Many artists do not have access to private transport. Domestic overcrowding and the lack of climate-controlled spaces at home mean that the art centre is often the only viable workspace for sustained practice. Art centres also commonly serve outstations and homelands that do not have their own art centre, extending their reach across substantial distances.

Enabling artists to continue their work. Art centres exist for the art production that is its primary business. To make that happen, an organisation needs to be sure that the artists are present and able

to make work. While art centres are not social-service providers, that role lies appropriately with health, social services and infrastructure agencies, in practice, they routinely absorb many of these services, because they understand that without such support many of their artists would not be able to continue art production. This can sometimes involve transporting an artist to centre by the centre's staff because the artist does not have the transport to get to centre (because of long distances, ill health or disability or lack of private vehicle). Or they have to provide a packed lunch to elderly artists or artists with disability, help artists manage finances or pass communications to artists or to the community for all the other organisations and agencies seeking to reach Indigenous people. In many communities, the art centre has the only equipment in good working order like a telephone, reliable internet connection or working printer. These enable activities are not funded separately, they form part of the costs incurred by that centre. But they are a direct means to ensure that artists continue to make their work.

The current model places the burden in the wrong place. By having art centres take on enabling activities unsupported by resources, this work costs either the artists themselves when the centre's resources are thin and its services less reliable - meaning the most vulnerable First Nations artists disengage from practice or drop off the list or it costs the arts production itself, because time taken up with this enabling work means time not taken up with professional development, engagement with markets, interaction with galleries, exhibition preparation or curation work and thereby reduces the artists' income and reach. Funding currently does not reflect these operational realities.

Operational realities in remote areas. In remote locations, these realities unfold in three operational dimensions. Transportation has already been mentioned but is a recurring issue and one that has become more expensive. Many art centres spend considerable daily hours ferrying artworks between communities and the capital-city markets, some of which even rent commercial storage in the regional towns for holding unsold works awaiting their return flight. A single-manager centre may dedicate several hours a day driving artists who cannot do so, especially elderly artists or artists living with disability, back and forth. As well, the remote availability and delivery costs of art materials and equipment add to these complexities. Multi-community service area many art centres have a far wider catchment area beyond their immediate community, servicing outstations and homelands some hundreds of kilometres distant. These centres may not be currently funded to cover such distances but operate within the current setting. These three factors are structurally inherent in the remoteness and therefore are core considerations for funding this work.

Workforce pressures. The art centre workforce is itself under pressure. Many art centres are managed by a single manager, often from outside the community, without funding to support an assistant, which creates substantial workload pressure. Managers from outside the community typically bring important industry knowledge, skills and external networks to the centre. Art centres are Indigenous-owned operations but are managed and governed by boards comprising Indigenous artists and community members who are local to each centre, creating a successful cross-cultural working situation. However, where a centre relies on a single manager, that person's eventual departure can result in significant loss of institutional knowledge. Where local Indigenous staff are available, their capacity could also be impacted by competing cultural and family responsibilities. Stable operational

funding is needed not just to fund existing activity but to invest in succession-planning to help ensure knowledge is kept and to manage the shift to First Nations leadership over time.

Recommendation. Stable, indexed multi-year recurrent operational funding for art centres and other Indigenous corporations supporting the arts in remote First Nations communities, calculated to the real cost of supporting artistic production in remote contexts and supported by coordinated arrangements with other service providers. The evidence thus points towards funding models that (i) are recurrent rather than project-based, providing multi-year certainty to a workforce that is vulnerable and geographically dispersed; (ii) are indexed against the real-terms erosion of operational capacity; (iii) are calculated to reflect better the actual cost of enabling artistic production in remote contexts, including transport, materials supply, communications, governance support and outstation reach; and (iv) are supported by coordinated arrangements with health, social services and infrastructure providers so that the support needs of vulnerable artists are not absorbed disproportionately into arts budgets.

5. Area of policy attention 2: Cultural transmission and the workforce that sustains the sector

The cultural and social capital pillar described in Section 3 is the sector's human workforce-reproduction system, one that has functioned for generations and continues to do so effectively, but that operates almost entirely outside formal workforce-development frameworks.

The simultaneous learning-and-teaching pattern. Across both cultural knowledge and artistic skills, most remote First Nations artists are concurrently learning and teaching: 71% are simultaneously still learning cultural knowledge and teaching it to others and 65% are in the same dual role for artistic skills. This pattern reflects the embedded, ongoing character of knowledge transmission in the sector: it is not confined to a specific career stage but runs throughout artists' working lives. Senior artists, who carry the most cultural authority, also carry the heaviest teaching load. The time-allocation data show that senior artists spend substantially more time per week than non-senior artists on average on teaching, cultural governance, arts management and ceremony. They are doing the foundational work of reproducing the workforce.

Most of this work is unpaid. Among artists currently teaching others in arts and culture, 53% of this teaching is unpaid nationally. The remaining 47% recorded as 'paid' indicates only that at least some payment was received, not that the work was fully or fairly remunerated. The same pattern characterises other workforce-reproducing activities: cultural archiving (35% unpaid), cultural governance roles (45% unpaid) and the broader category of cultural maintenance work that supports sector continuity. The result is that the people on whom the future of the sector depends are doing the most foundational work for the least pay.

Succession risk. The data point to a concentrated succession risk. Half the workforce is senior; their teaching work is largely unpaid; alternative formal pathways for skill acquisition reach a small minority of artists. Without deliberate investment in a paid framework for cultural transmission, the next

decade carries the risk that the system that has produced the existing workforce will not produce its successor at the same scale and quality.

Workforce development that recognises actual learning pathways. The First Nations Creative Workforce Development Strategy provides a vehicle for addressing this issue. Its design would need to recognise that family and community-based learning is the primary mode of skill acquisition in the remote First Nations art sector and could be supported as such. The "trainer" workforce on whom this depends is the senior artist population and this work needs to be remunerated. Existing initiatives demonstrate that community-determined, multi-year paid cultural transmission is workable. Creative Australia's *Legacy: First Nations Multi-Year Project Fund* (formerly *Chosen*) has operated in some form since 2013, providing \$50,000 per year over three years to support First Nations communities and elders to identify and deliver skill transmission through models appropriate to their community. After more than a decade of operation, the structural question is whether and how such approaches can be embedded across the sector at a scale commensurate with the size of the workforce-reproduction task, rather than supported through periodic competitive rounds reaching a small number of recipients.

Recommendation. A formal paid framework for cultural transmission, recognising family and community-based learning as the primary mode of skill acquisition in the remote First Nations art sector. The framework would recognise senior artists as the carriers of the workforce-reproduction system and support paid remuneration for their teaching, mentoring and cultural governance work.

6. Area of policy attention 3: Cultural governance

Cultural governance is a distinct dimension of cultural labour in the remote First Nations art sector that warrants particular policy attention. It rests almost entirely on senior Indigenous cultural practitioners, including senior artists and community leaders and under current legal and funding arrangements is largely unable to be remunerated.

Senior artists carry the governance load. Indigenous corporations and not-for-profit organisations operating in remote communities in the arts are governed by boards of local Indigenous artists and community leaders. The same individuals are commonly required on multiple boards and committees simultaneously, including arts and non-arts, and on a stream of one-off consultations with external organisations seeking cross-cultural guidance. For some senior artists, cultural governance and cross-cultural consulting now occupy a substantial share of their working time. The time-allocation data show that senior artists spend on average roughly five times as much time on governance as non-senior artists; nationally on average, 45% of governance work is undertaken without any form of payment and the remaining 55% received at least some payment, though not necessarily full remuneration.

The unpaid character of governance work is structurally embedded. Three structural features explain why governance work in the remote First Nations art sector is largely unpaid. First, most art centres and related bodies are Indigenous corporations registered under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 (CATSI Act), whose budgets are designed to reinvest in artist support

rather than directors' fees. Second, under the CATSI Act, board members cannot be remunerated unless the organisation's constitution specifically permits it; many constitutions are silent on the question. Third, board members themselves often understand their role as a community and cultural obligation, distinct from the (frequently salaried) management role within the same organisation. The result is a system in which the senior Indigenous cultural authority on whom the institutional architecture rests is the least-paid category of worker within it.

A structurally different governance context. The pattern observed in the remote First Nations art sector is structurally different from mainstream Australian non-executive board service. Mainstream governance roles are typically held by individuals drawn from a broad pool of qualified directors, attended intermittently and accompanied by sitting fees calibrated to that broad availability. In the remote First Nations art sector, the conditions are reversed. The pool of holders of cultural authority is small. The same individuals are required across multiple boards, committees and one-off consultations because cultural authority, knowledge of country, of language, of family and kinship relationships, of cultural protocols, cannot be generated quickly or transferred between people. Demand on this small group is therefore concentrated, intensive and continuous; there is no mechanism within the existing institutional structures to distribute the load. The cumulative effect is that cultural governance has become a working load on a finite group of people who carry cultural authority, but it remains framed and resourced as discretionary community service.

A related pattern affects cross-cultural consulting work. Beyond formal board roles, senior artists are routinely sought out as cross-cultural advisers, interpreters and consultants by external organisations and agencies. These categories have direct potential for paid engagement, but demand and supply are not consistently brokered. Even where individual engagements are remunerated, the cumulative time absorbed in cross-cultural intermediation often falls outside any structured payment arrangement.

A sustainability problem. This pattern is unsustainable. As senior artists' time is increasingly absorbed into unpaid governance and cross-cultural work, less of it is available for the artistic practice, mentorship and cultural transmission roles documented in Area 2. The institutions on whom the sector depends rely on senior artists' continuing engagement; without recognition and remuneration of their governance work, that engagement is at risk.

Recommendation. Recognition of cultural governance as remunerable cultural labour, supported by attention to the structural and regulatory barriers that currently prevent senior cultural authorities from being paid for their governance work. The evidence suggests a need to examine the structural and regulatory settings that affect remuneration for board members of Indigenous corporations, alongside funding settings that would make it possible for cultural governance work to be recognised and paid.

7. Area of policy attention 4: From project-based to recurrent funding across the cultural ecosystem

The first three areas of policy attention address specific dimensions of the remote First Nations art sector. This fourth area addresses a cross-cutting issue in how the sector is funded: the predominance of project-based and competitive funding cycles and the under-recognition of synergies across related cultural and community organisations.

Under-utilised capability. A consistent pattern across the data is the gap between artists' demonstrated experience and their current engagement in particular activities. Among artists who have ever engaged in filmmaking or multimedia work, only 52% are currently active in this practice; in writing and storytelling, 57%; in cultural archiving, 57%; in cultural tourism, 64%. These activities require institutional support, specialised infrastructure or external markets, making them sensitive to funding fluctuations. The capability exists in the artist population; the structural conditions for sustained engagement are intermittent.

Funding mediation and the application bottleneck. As shown in Section 3, only 2% of artists apply for funding independently, while 45% do not apply at all. The intermediation provided by art centres and other Indigenous corporations is what makes the funding system work, but it also means that when an art centre is operationally over-stretched (Area of policy attention 1), the funding pipeline to artists narrows. Application-based competitive funding, in this context, functions as a regressive mechanism: organisations and artists with the strongest existing administrative capacity are best placed to secure further funding, while those with weaker capacity are systematically disadvantaged.

The hybrid-organisation principle. Remote First Nations communities are supported by several major networks of Indigenous corporations and not-for-profit organisations: art centres in the arts; ranger organisations in land and sea management; language centres in linguistic and cultural preservation; cultural centres in exhibition and heritage. These networks are operationally and economically connected. Ranger work supports artists' access to materials and to country; cultural centres and ranger organisations are often hosted by the same parent Indigenous corporation; language centres provide cultural-knowledge resources that feed both arts production and cultural tourism; cultural centres provide market-facing venues for art centre and individual artists' output. Funding settings that treat these networks as independent silos miss the synergies that flow from their interconnection.

Recommendation. The evidence supports a shift toward more recurrent funding models for the remote First Nations cultural ecosystem, with funding settings that better recognise synergies across art centres, ranger organisations, language centres and cultural centres.

8. Alignment with the Revive baseline and Pillar 1 framework

Within Pillar 1, *Revive* built a baseline by implementing a First Nations Board within Creative Australia, establishing a dedicated First Nations Arts funding stream, supporting IVAIS's continuation and formulating the First Nations Creative Workforce Development Strategy. The four areas of policy attention included in this submission engage with this baseline. Policy attention 1 (operational funding

for art centres) extends the recognition implicit in IVAIS to a scale and structure that reflects the full operational realities documented in the survey. Policy attention 2 (paid cultural transmission) operationalises the First Nations Creative Workforce Development Strategy in a way that aligns with the workforce-reproduction patterns the data describe. Policy attention 3 (cultural governance) extends the recognition of First Nations leadership established through the First Nations Board within Creative Australia to the community-level Indigenous corporation boards that sustain the broader institutional architecture. Policy attention 4 (recurrent funding and ecosystem coordination) builds on the institutional architecture established under *Revive* by addressing how those instruments interact with related Indigenous corporation networks.

Together, these areas of policy attention offer a pathway through which the next policy cycle can extend the *Revive* baseline to addressing the operational environments crucial for long-term sustainability.

9. Closing comments

The remote First Nations art sector has a particular character that distinguishes it from the broader Australian professional arts sector. It is community-controlled. It rests on family and community-based artistic skill and cultural knowledge acquisition. It operates through Indigenous corporations that combine arts, cultural and governance functions and, in the absence of alternative service provision, often absorb a substantial enabling workload to keep their artists practising. It supports, and is supported by, interlocking cultural systems including language, ceremony, knowledge of country and the cultural authority of senior artists.

This combination of features is not a stage of development to be evolved out of as the sector matures. It is the form that has functioned for the duration of contemporary remote First Nations art production and that the survey data show is currently functioning across the surveyed regions. Policy that supports this form on its own terms, rather than seeking to convert it into an approximation of the mainstream Australian arts sector, is most likely to produce long-run sustainability.

This submission has identified four areas of policy attention for the remote First Nations art sector, grounded in the evidence assembled across the six regional reports and the forthcoming national report of the *National Survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists*. We acknowledge that Pillar 1 covers a wider First Nations cohort including artists in regional and urban areas, whose circumstances differ from those documented in our research.

We would be pleased to provide further data, analysis or briefings to support the development of the next National Cultural Policy.

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