



National Cultural Policy 2026

My name is [REDACTED] and I work as the Manager at [REDACTED], a community-controlled Aboriginal art and culture centre based in the [REDACTED] supporting approximately 72 artists, arts workers and cultural leaders from several language groups living on [REDACTED] Country. We also run the [REDACTED] Artists project, which is a small art studio in [REDACTED] servicing the [REDACTED] language groups residing in this remote community. Our artists produce ochre paintings on canvas as well as print textiles, work in fashion design, ceramics, limited edition prints, carvings, installation art, animations, and painting on barks.

In my role, I see firsthand that the everyday work of our centre goes well beyond the production and sale of art. We support members to provide cultural mentoring and workshops to the wider community within [REDACTED] providing cultural tourism experiences, passing on cultural knowledge between Elders and younger generations, providing a safe and healthy place for families and youth to engage in, where people can come together to practice and share culture. We also provide Indigenous employment and training with the majority of our staff being Indigenous. We provide career pathways for local Indigenous people who otherwise would not be easily employed. In the last financial year 24/25 we provided \$1.5 million (65% of our income) to Indigenous people in income and wages.

Much of our work takes place in remote and isolated environments, with limited infrastructure, small teams and significant operational pressures. Our centre has delivered strong outcomes for artists and community and contributes to a nationally and internationally recognised arts and culture sector.

At [REDACTED] Corporation, this includes the [REDACTED] exhibition at the Australian Embassy in Washington D.C. USA, winning the Indigenous Tourism category at [REDACTED] Tourism Awards in [REDACTED] winning Indigenous Business of the Year [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] Chamber of Commerce Awards, our Children and Parents program funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS) provides opportunities for families to engage socially outside the pressures of the town of Kununurra, we provide regular community nights featuring corroboree performances so young people can learn their culture, working on major commissions such as the NGV Fashion Couture commission [REDACTED]. Finally, our cultural keeping space has recently been refurbished into the first [REDACTED] museum in Australia.



However, this work is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. In my role, I am seeing challenges across all areas of operations, especially in staff housing, the ability to pay appropriate wages to arts workers and cultural workers, insurance fees, vehicle and fuel costs, alongside growing administrative and governance responsibilities. In the 24/25 financial year IVAIS funding covered close to 10% of our operating expenses and 29% of our wages, forcing the art centre to compete for largely short-term funding. Burn out and turnover is high. These pressures are not reflected in our current funding settings and are placing increasing strain on our ability to be sustainable. [REDACTED] recommends IVAIS operational funding be tripled and Employment funding to be doubled, and increased annually to reflect the CPI.

In addition, [REDACTED] recommends that the National Cultural Policy consider implementing an artist income scheme similar to Basic Income of the Arts (BIA) pioneered in Ireland in 2022. This scheme provides eligible artists and creative workers with an unconditional, tax-able weekly payment. Aimed at addressing financial instability in the creative sector, the program allows artists to focus on their practice rather than juggling multiple survival jobs. Following a highly successful 3-year pilot (2022–2025) which found that the scheme generated significant social returns, the Irish government transitioned the program to a permanent structure.

A scheme such as this is particularly critical for First Nations artists in Australia. Helping to alleviate economic pressure, secure appropriate housing, transition to self-sufficiency, and support creative development and cultural preservation practices.

To continue supporting artists, culture and community into the future, we need stable and adequate core funding, recognition of the full scope of work delivered by art and culture centres and investment in workforce and infrastructure needed for sustainable operations in remote contexts.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute.

Kind regards

