



Image: Carol Young weaving during a Ku Arts artist camp, 2022; Photo: Margaret Rose.

SUBMISSION TO THE NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY CONSULTATION



**By Ku Arts
(Ananguku Arts and Cultural Aboriginal Corporation)**

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1. List of recommendations



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Recommendation 2: Specific funding for ongoing employment and capacity building of First Nations arts worker roles both within art centres and also working independently of art centres, in regional and remote regions, with professional development and operational support that reflect local realities.

Recommendation 3: Funding Review in line with the 2022 recommendation of the Productivity Commission, we call on the Government to instigate a sector-wide co-designed review of government expenditure directed to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual arts sector with the aim of ensuring the long-term viability and impact of the sector.

Recommendation 4: Review of Regional Funding Eligibility Requirements

The Government should review regional funding criteria that stipulate an organisation's registered fixed business address must be primarily located in a regional area. This excludes access to vital funds for metropolitan based Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation's where the majority of their programs and services are delivered in regional and remote locations supporting skills development and employment.

Recommendation 5: Recognising the Alliance

The National Cultural Policy should recognise the Alliance as an advisory, research and advocacy body engaging with Government on matters related to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture centre sector across portfolios including but not limited to arts, health, housing, infrastructure, education, employment and workplace relations.

Recommendation 6: National Infrastructure Fund

Ku Arts supports the call by the Alliance for the Government to establish a National Infrastructure Fund for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art and Culture Centres to finance fit-for-purpose, safe, climate-resilient and digitally capable infrastructure, guided by a national framework developed with the Alliance.

Recommendation 7: Sector Mapping

We call on the Government to enter a co-design process with the Alliance to create a national sector mapping project that details the full contribution made by remote art and culture centres to service provision in their communities. This project should devise a mechanism to measure, evaluate and fund all services provided by art and culture centres.

Recommendation 8: Tax Reform

Ku Arts supports the NSW Department of Creative Industries' proposal that the Federal Government consider tax reforms affecting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual art sector.

2. About Ku Arts



Ku Arts vision: **Strong Arts, Strong Culture, Strong Community**

Ku Arts (Anangu Arts and Culture Aboriginal Corporation) is the South Australian peak body for Aboriginal controlled art centres and independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists in South Australia. We work with thousands of First Nations artists statewide and support art centres on the APY Lands and throughout regional and remote South Australia.

Ku Arts began in 1998 when artists and art-centre managers from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands created a regional body to market and support their work across South Australia. Throughout the 2000s Ku Arts broadened its programs to strengthen the South Australian Aboriginal fine-arts movement by recruiting skilled art-centre managers, running roving workshops across the western APY Lands. In 2006 the organisation launched the Statewide Indigenous Community Arts Development (SICAD) program to create career pathways, enterprise development and professional creative development opportunities for First Nations artists working where no community-owned art centre existed.

Ku Arts is a founding member of the Aboriginal Torres Strait Island Arts and Culture Centre Alliance (the Alliance), a coalition of peak bodies representing regional and remote Indigenous artists across nationally.

Ku Arts is a supporting member of the Indigenous Art Code (IAC), and we acknowledge the IAC is essential for preserving the integrity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual arts sector by promoting transparent, fair, and ethical trade. By establishing clear guidelines for commercial relationships, the Code guides best practice business behaviour and includes principles of transparency and respect for Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property, so that artists are supported to make self-determined decisions when selling and

licensing their artwork, and buyers are empowered to support the world's oldest living culture fairly and with confidence.

Ku Arts is also a member of the National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) which aims to improve conditions of work and practice across the visual arts sector through advocacy, education and its Code of Practice. We support NAVA's Reconciliation Action Plan in its commitment to embedding cultural competence into visual arts sector industry standards.

3. What We Do



“Nganana kunpu kanyinma arts munu culture nganampa tijiji nganampa tjutaku.”

We help keep art centres strong and our culture strong for our children.

– Alison Milyika Carroll, Ku Arts Anangu Mayatja

Ku Arts is a service delivery organisation and a peak body representing the interests of all First Nations artists and art centres in South Australia. We are recognised nationally as one of five peak bodies advocating for Aboriginal artists and their communities. We contribute to research projects, government inquiries, information and data collection and the making of recommendations for sector improvements. Ku Arts is sought after for our expertise and connections with independent Aboriginal artists across South Australia and for our commitment to culturally appropriate consultation with individuals, communities and art centres.

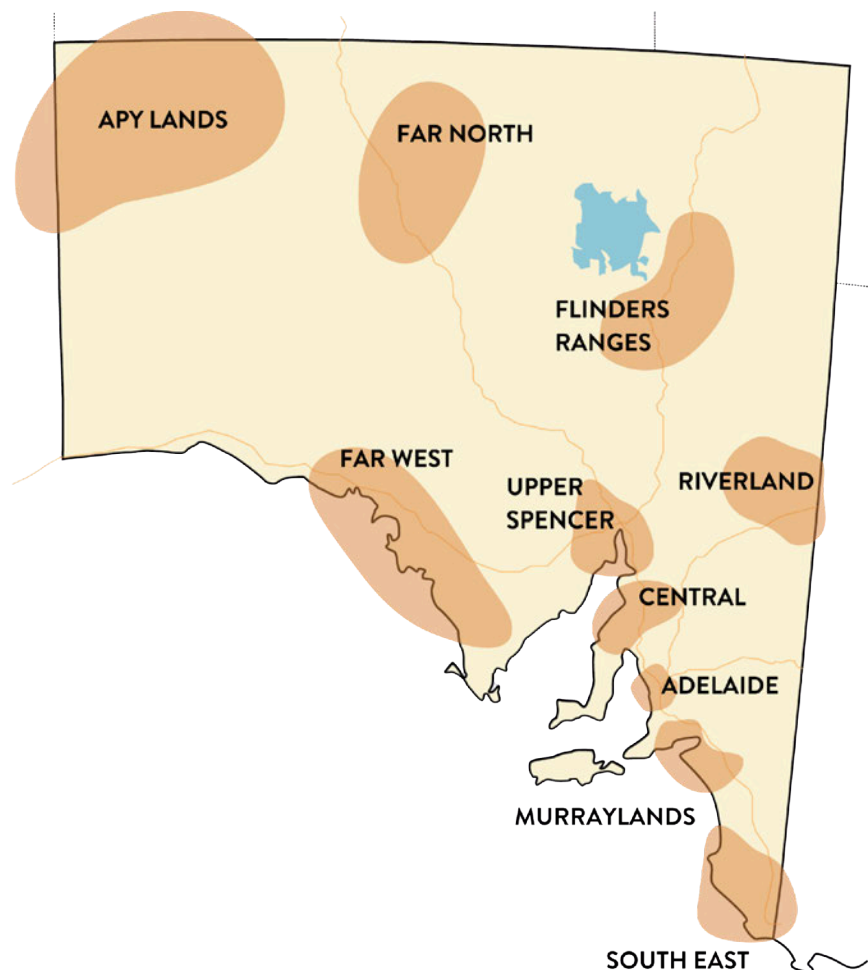
- We provide practical, on the ground support for art centres boards, staff, artswokers, and artists, including governance, staff inductions, and recruitment.
- We auspice infrastructure projects and facility improvements for Art Centres and negotiate access to existing and new buildings and facilities for First Nations artists across regional and remote SA.
- We connect artists with professional advisors to match their needs in copyright, licensing, intellectual property, fees, pricing, retail, and exhibition arrangements.
- Understanding the circumstances of First Nations artists in metropolitan, regional or remote locations, enables us to guide them towards mentorships, residencies, entry into prizes and awards, sales and marketing avenues for their arts practice.
- Ku Arts is committed to creating employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people in art centres and across the wider arts and cultural sector.
- We engage Aboriginal cultural consultants and arts facilitators on a program/project basis and support artists in professionalising their practices and running their own small businesses.

Ku Arts provides wide ranging support for independent Indigenous artists. We regularly conduct workshops, exhibitions and events in regional and remote locations to deliver arts practice workshops, business training and marketing initiatives to First Nations artists who are not connected to an existing art centre. We deliver programs that span South Australia.

Our outreach to independent artists falls across seven regions including:

- Eyre peninsula and Far West (Port Lincoln, Ceduna, Yalata, Oak Valley)
- Far North (Coober Pedy, Oodnadatta, APY Lands)
- Upper Spencer (Port Augusta, Whyalla)
- Flinders Ranges (Hawker, Copley)
- Yorke Peninsula and Mid North (Kadina, Point Pierce, Port Pirie)
- Riverlands (Renmark, Berri, Barmera)
- South East (Mount Gambier, Kingston, Naracoorte)

Our outreach combining independent artists and art centres falls across ten regions:



4. Capacity building



Recommendation 1:

Specific funding for on-country visual arts programs for First Nations independent artists in regional and remote areas.

Recommendation 2:

Specific funding for ongoing employment and capacity building of First Nations arts worker roles both within art centres, and/or working independently of an art centre, in remote and regional South Australian regions, with professional development and operational support that reflect local realities.

Ku Arts acknowledges that there are many ways to be a practising artist or creative and recognises that the art centre model is not the sole framework supporting the First Nations arts sector in South Australia. Independent practice, community hubs, community-based work, and diverse cultural and creative pathways all play an important role in sustaining and strengthening First Nations arts and culture in South Australia.

As a peak body in the unique position of supporting both Aboriginal controlled art centres and independent First Nations artists, Ku Arts has a material understanding of how the allocation of funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual arts has failed remote and regional artists working independently of art centres. For the past two decades Ku Arts has delivered the Statewide Indigenous Community Arts Development (SICAD) program to support professional development for independent First Nations artists who do not work through an existing community-controlled art centre.

For over 20 years, funding for this program has not increased, including no increases for CPI. Demand for the program has grown significantly across the state however funding for

the program has not kept up with demand and currently covers only a portion of one staff member to deliver the program. Program delivery is reliant on securing ad-hoc, short term, and often 'one off' project funding, stifling strategic delivery and meaningful long-term impact.

- Over the three years to June 2025 Ku Arts engaged with 4,338 Aboriginal artists through seminars, workshops and training programs statewide.
- In 2025 Ku Arts travelled over 40,000 kilometres across South Australia delivering on-country programming and services in remote and regional communities.
- We support regional independent First Nations artists through access to programs including specialised arts practice workshops, training in marketing and arts administration, culture camps on country and access to quality art materials.
- Participant surveys show a high level of satisfaction with programmed events with artists revealing it inspired creativity and gave new perspectives on art making while connecting them to other Aboriginal artists within their communities and providing a culturally safe space to expand their knowledge and skill level. (Ku Arts, 2025a, p.4).

The growing demand for artist support services from independent Aboriginal artists living and working in communities where no Aboriginal art centre exists cannot be ignored.

Ku Arts is keen to work with State and Federal governments on a plan to deliver ongoing, place-based programs facilitated and delivered across all seven regions, by First Nations artists, with secure and meaningful ongoing employment, professional development, and supported with operational funding that reflects the realities of working in regional and remote communities.

As the Productivity Commission (2022) found, independent artists have trouble accessing legal services and information about copyright, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property, ethical dealing in the art market through the Indigenous Art Code and other

services (p.39) and recommended that the Government ‘... consider ways to ensure services are able to respond to the needs of all types of artists in all regions (p.39).’

The Commission also recommended in the same report that the Government should ‘consider additional ring-fenced funding for ... improved access to programs that allow independent artists to strengthen business skills alongside their artistic practice’ (p.42). The commission found that almost 2000 independent artists generate almost \$13 million a year in sales (p.85).

Participants feedback across Ku Arts regional and remote programs consistently reinforces the importance of place-based delivery, with 96% of 2024-25 participants highlighting that ‘... it is important it’s happening here’ (Ku Arts, 2025a, p.5). This reflects the high value placed on accessing professional and creative opportunities on-country and within community.

A joint submission to the Productivity Commission from Arts Law, Copyright Agency, and the Indigenous Art Code asserted that;

There are extremely limited opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists working outside of the art centre model to have access to similar opportunities, with very few organisations doing this work and none of them properly resourced to undertake comprehensive programming and development support for independent artists (Productivity Commission, 2022, p.302).

There is a clear and well documented need to improve the provision of services for independent First Nations artists Australia-wide.

We call on the Government to invest in professional capacity building and employment pathways for regional and remote based First Nations visual artworkers and artists in South Australia.

5. Strengthening support for First Nations artists and art centres



Recommendation 3: Funding Review

In line with the 2022 recommendation of the Productivity Commission, we call on the Government to instigate a sector-wide co-designed review of government expenditure directed to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual arts sector with the aim of ensuring the long-term viability and impact of the sector.

We support the calls from other peak bodies and the Alliance for a wide-ranging review of government funding for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual arts sector.

Recommendation 4: Review of Regional Funding Eligibility Requirements

The Government should review some regional funding criteria that stipulate an organisation's registered fixed business address must be primarily located in a regional area. This excludes access to vital funds for metropolitan based Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation's where the majority of their programs and services are delivered in regional and remote locations supporting skills development and employment.

As a peak body with a remit for delivering services and programming across the state we work hard to secure project funding to deliver bespoke programming to support the diverse needs of First Nations artists statewide. However, project funding is often short term in nature and restricted to one-off projects and can include caveats and restrictions on accessing the funds for the same project more than once. Ku Arts stretches its resources to

deliver services to regional and remote independent artists and art centres with no way to access resources and support in a culturally safe environment.

A significant impediment to accessing regional development funding has arisen due to the location of Ku Arts head office in Adelaide. Our metropolitan address has sometimes disqualified Ku Arts from applying for regional development funding even though the Ku Arts Board of First Nations Directors represent seven regional and remote regions across South Australia, and our remit is to fund impactful services and programs in regional and remote communities, where the majority of our programs are delivered.

6. The Alliance



Ku Arts supports the Alliance's submission to the National Cultural Policy Consultation and its call for the government to recognise the Alliance as a formal advisory partner for the art and culture centre sector. Ku Arts supports the following recommendations by the Alliance:

Recommendation 5: Recognising the Alliance

The National Cultural Policy should recognise the Alliance as an advisory, research and advocacy body engaging with Government on matters related to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture centre sector across portfolios including but not limited to arts, health, housing, infrastructure, education, employment and workplace relations.

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Recommendation 7: Sector Mapping

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The National Agreement on Closing the Gap commits state/territory and the Australian governments to create structures that empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share decision making authority with governments. In 2022, the Productivity Commission noted that the current approach to determining funding objectives for the art centre sector, ‘... does not include shared decision-making between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (p.40).’

Recognising the Alliance as an advisory partner enables the government to engage with First Nations artists, arts workers and cultural leaders on the ground in regional and remote communities. It provides the government with a single, representative body for co-design, reducing complexity and ensuring regional and remote First Nations voices from across the sector are heard in one place.

7. Tax Reform



Recent research conducted by the NSW Department of Creative Industries (NSW Gov, 2025) into tax reform to benefit arts and culture devised a range of measures to ease the tax burden on artists and arts organisations. The art and culture sector has highlighted tax policy

settings as a 'notable impediment to artists and creatives' business viability, international competitiveness and income stability (NSW Gov, 2025, p.6).'

Ku Arts supports calls to review tax policy settings that impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and regional and remote art centre businesses.

Recommendation 8: Tax Reform

Ku Arts supports the NSW Department of Creative Industries' proposal that the Federal Government consider the following tax reforms affecting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual art sector.

- Make prize and grant money for creative competitions tax-free.
- Amend GST rules to prevent artists and creatives from being required to register for GST after a one-off spike in income.
- Offer a standard deduction for individual artists and creatives in lieu of itemising numerous small expenses and keeping receipts.
- Raise the minimum distribution rate for Private Ancillary Funds in line with Productivity Commission advice.
- Amend Self-Managed Superfunds (SMSF) rules to permit artworks owned by the fund to be displayed in the member's home or business premises.
- Broaden the range of deductible expenses to include living costs for artists undertaking residencies; Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) costs such as travel to Country and engagement with Elders; and costs while touring, including childcare.
- Improve tax education, support and guidance (and financial literacy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and arts workers).

8. References



Ku Arts, 2025a, *Activity report 2024/25, Statewide Indigenous arts development (SICAD) project*

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