

DETAILED RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS IN THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S CONSULTATION PAPER ON GROWING THE INDIGENOUS VISUAL ARTS INDUSTRY

Theme 1: Sustainable growth	
1.	<p>What practical actions do you think will assist to rebuild the market in a sustainable way?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous-led ownership. • Cultural competency training. • Community-led programs and investment, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are leading the conversation and decision, and not merely consulted. • Creating and unearthing clear pathways to the market and leadership positions. • Clarity around accessing the market – primarily authentic products. • Education regarding economic development – creative enterprise and opportunity. • Development opportunities to engage and upskill. • Mandatory consideration of Indigenous business in procurement. • Professional development – instigated and delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. • Define how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enter a non-Indigenous structure? Where/who are the gatekeepers? • Using digital technologies and support to bridge the gap (i.e. access to grant applications). • Comprehensive gap and market analysis towards improvement of the supply chain.
2.	<p>What do you like or dislike about how the market currently works?</p> <p>Dislike:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clear pathways indicating how to access authentic practitioners and their art. • No central arts centre/hub – an Indigenous Cultural Centre has not been delivered for Queensland. • Tokenism. • Lack of regulation for unethical sale of cultural material or Intellectual Property. • Lack of understanding of authentic versus non-authentic, and the consequence of non-authentic market operation. • Tourism & Events Queensland currently not leveraging the market, and subsequently enabling non-authentic businesses to survive. • Disconnect between authentic practitioners with the market and the consumer. • Lack of appropriate resources/upskilling. • Reliance upon the few to represent the many. • Offshore production. • Current communication and function of image licencing rights/resale royalties. • Romanticism of 'traditional' culture. <p>Like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence of contemporary, young practitioners.
4.	<p>Different words have different meanings for different people – how do you like to be referred to as – 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people' or 'First Nations people'?</p>
<p>The 2018 Reconciliation Action Plan investigations show that the major preference is 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people', however, opinions differ.</p> <p>Each community is different and a lot of conversations recently have shifted to identifying the individual from their Country rather than homogenising as First Nations or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Note: First Nations <i>may</i> reference the traditional owner groups of many countries.</p>	

5. What do you understand 'authentic Indigenous art' to mean? What type of artwork should be included in this definition?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people leading and driving narrative and action, with minimal or no non-Indigenous input. Definition sought from the practitioner. Note: Awareness of 'art' versus cultural items is required.

Theme 2: Capability Building

6. What skills do you think are important in the industry? What ways do you build those skills? What would help you to build those skills?

- Cultural competency training.
- Organisational planning and governance – accommodation of diversity.
- Project management.
- Human resources management – finding the right people/skills and retaining them.
- Community consultation.
- Accessibility of information – appropriate engagement.
- Training for artists regarding their rights.
- Artist training in process, professional development.
- Understanding the basics of 'how to be an artist'.

7. Do you get the support and materials you need from your art centre?

The current levels of support and materials delivered from governing bodies are inadequate and raise the following concerns:

- Lack of consultation with community, or tokenism displayed.
- Good aspirations exist – however, these often result in non-Indigenous-led outcomes.

Delivery of support and materials should consider:

- A lifetime approach to programs and investment, not just at beginning of project.
- Adequate officers to facilitate appropriate support, access and materials.
- Community-led platforms/initiatives rather than Government/Council endorsed programs or platforms.

8. Is there more that can be done to encourage the development of Indigenous-owned and operated businesses in the industry?

- Creating accessible, transparent pathways.
- Seeking and celebrating businesses that are already operating, or individuals already exploring innovative and creative practice.
- Supply Nation (registration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses)/Indigenous Business Australia (general business) is a great example.
- Inspiration, engagement of skilled individuals – empowering others through aspiration.
- Reconciliation Action Plan, to effectively include, acknowledge and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders on Country, within organisations and communities.
- Increasing Indigenous staffing and education/competence of existing staff.
- Improving procurement policies.
- Professional development.
- Mentorships – reaching further afield into diverse businesses (not restricted to the arts industry).
- Governance training.

Theme 3: Access to market

9. What can be done to assist artists to better connect with the art market?

- Capacity development opportunities that offer skills, confidence and agency to approach market.
- Regulatory body/portal.
- Community-led platforms, rather than attached to impenetrable institutions or markets.
- Diversity of goods and services, broad market scope to encourage cross-cultural exchange and collaboration.
- Diverse engagement and procurement methods.
- Regulatory body/portal.
- Removal of 'the middle-man' – direct to consumer model.
- Understanding of the expanded arts market – inclusive of the creative, design, public sectors.
- Increase of physical and online arts markets – promotion to wider sectors.

10. How can digital technologies overcome the challenges of remote locations?

Understanding barriers to digital technologies is the first step. Key areas of investigation include:

- Internet connection – providing physical technology.
- Digital literacy and skills – utilise increased digital reliance post-COVID.
- Agile marketing infrastructure.

This will enable utilisation of digital technologies to bridge the gap between remote locations by:

- Creating unique digital offerings in a crowded marketplace.
- A mouthpiece for remote communities to connect with City legislatures or advocates.

12. Is there more that needs to be done to engage with the international arts market as well as tourists in Australia?

There are certainly many ways to improve engagement with the international market and tourism sector. Culture should be embedded in everything we do – language, development, tourism, commercial commodity. Cairns is a key example of utilising Indigenous visual arts as a cornerstone of the place-identity, supported through the local arts market and events such as the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair. Other cities should be promoting or following this model.

13. If overseas activities were to be supported, would this assist in engaging in the international market and do you consider this should be a priority?

During 2020, there were many widespread changes within the international visual arts industry, largely consequential of the financial impact of COVID-19 and limited physical engagement. Moving forward, the international market will be required to continue to adapt in order to sustain the industry. The following activities are suggested as actions to prioritise to enable the Australian Indigenous visual arts industry to effectively engage on an international stage:

- Predominantly digital engagement.
- Presence at international art fairs.
- Australian embassy influence – gifts and merchandising.
- Licencing and royalties for graphic design and artwork, whilst embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in international marketing and merchandising opportunities.

Theme 4: Legal protections

18. Is there more that could be done to increase awareness of moral, cultural and intellectual property rights?

- Intellectual Property/Property Rights clause/s specific to Indigenous protocol should be adopted in Agreements/Contract.
- On-boarding protocol or Standard Operating Procedure for producers/artists to inform them of their rights.
- A reference guide that distils common language (with reference to the type of clauses to expect in an agreement). If this doesn't exist already, why not?
- Use industry leaders and advocates such as Terri Janke, in communicating legal rights.
- Marketing and branding.
- Education for local and international tourism.
- Widespread campaigning – via brands such as Qantas.

19. How do you think that Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property protections could work in practical terms?

- Education – practitioners (knowing their rights) and consumers (understanding of ethical use/purchase).
- Resources and contacts for practitioners whose Intellectual Property has been breached.
- Certification/trademark scheme.
- Register of vetted practitioners, individuals, businesses, governing bodies and representatives.
- Identifiable gap and opportunity.
- This also increases accessibility and visibility.