



**Submission to**

**Senate Inquiry**  
**into the**  
**Indigenous visual arts and craft sector.**

**November 2006.**

## **Preamble:**

Arts NSW welcomes the Senate Inquiry into the Indigenous visual arts and craft sector and the opportunity to outline the current composition and new trends of the NSW sector and key areas of opportunities and pressures.

NSW has the largest State population of Indigenous people in Australia with the following demographics:

- 30% of Australia's Indigenous population lives in NSW.
- The representation of remote and very remote Indigenous populations in NSW, compared to the Indigenous Australian population, is extremely low.
- The representation of urban and regional Indigenous populations in NSW, compared to the Indigenous Australian population, is particularly high (ranging from 25% to 47%).
- Just over 20% of the total Indigenous visual arts and craft professionals live in NSW, reflecting the statistical influence of 'Desert' artists on national statistics.

Urban communities within NSW have developed from a long history of Indigenous populations moving from their own traditional locations due to a variety of socio-economic reasons and embedding within the existing Indigenous population of the area.

In many cases, this movement creates particular issues associated with the significant impact that disconnection from traditional lands and cultural practices cause. It also creates very unique cultural profiles that have led to the development of a vibrant Indigenous urban art sector.

**The need for adequate recognition and support for urban and inner regional indigenous populations under existing and future programs of support for Indigenous visual arts and craft is the most important proposition within this submission.**

There is a clear need for national co-ordination and leadership by the Commonwealth, complimented by bilateral approaches to indigenous arts development. The NSW Indigenous Arts Development Strategy provides a number of opportunities for enhanced Commonwealth support to match NSW initiatives.

**The need for appropriate and proportionate support to enable Indigenous visual arts and craft to take place in areas of relocation, and to be acknowledged and recognised as relevant and valid forms of art form practice is critical to the achievement of COAG goals for social reform in Indigenous affairs and for the Cultural Ministers Council's foremost priority under its 2006 Framework for National Cooperation.**

A number of case studies have been provided to illustrate the scope of this sector and the need for ongoing investment into its continued development.

**a) The current size and scale of NSW's Indigenous visual arts and craft sector;**

An appreciation of the demographics of Indigenous peoples within NSW is needed to understand the NSW Indigenous visual arts and craft sector. NSW has the largest population of Indigenous people in Australia with a population base centred within both major urban areas and rural and remote areas.

**Number and Distribution of Indigenous Australians:**

In June 2001, the estimated resident Indigenous population of NSW was 134,888, which was 2.1% of the total population of NSW. By comparison, Indigenous people made up 2.4% of the total Australian population.

NSW accounted for over one-quarter (29%) of the Indigenous population of Australia.

Of the 134,888 Indigenous people in NSW, 6% lived in remote or very remote areas.

**ESTIMATED RESIDENT INDIGENOUS POPULATION(a), By remoteness areas, 2001**

	NSW no.	Aust no.	% in NSW
Major cities	56 773	138 494	41.0
Inner regional	43 697	92 988	47.0
Outer regional	25 922	105 875	24.5
Remote	6 178	40 161	15.4
Very remote	2 318	81 002	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>134 888</b>	<b>458 520</b>	<b>29.4</b>

(a) Estimates are experimental.

Source: ABS, *Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001* (cat. no. 4713.0).

**Participation in Indigenous Creative Arts:**

In 2002, about 16% of Indigenous people aged 15 years and over in NSW were involved in Indigenous arts and crafts activities during the previous 12 months, 8% had performed Indigenous music, dance or theatre, and 12% had written or told Indigenous stories. Overall, about one-quarter (26%) of Indigenous people had participated in at least one of these selected Indigenous creative arts activities, with the majority (83%) not receiving any payment. Participation was lower for people living in remote areas (19%) than non-remote areas (26%).

CREATIVE ARTS PARTICIPATION BY INDIGENOUS  
PERSONS, NSW, In last 12 months, 2002

	'000	% of Indigenous population(b)
<i>Type of Indigenous activity(a)</i>		
Arts and crafts	13.4	16.0
Music, dance or theatre	6.3	7.6
Writing or telling stories	10.0	11.9
<i>Whether paid</i>		
Paid	3.6	4.3
Not paid	17.9	21.4
<i>Age group (years)</i>		
15-34	12.0	14.3
35 years and over	9.5	11.3
<i>Remoteness</i>		
Non-remote	20.5	24.5
Remote	1.0	1.2
<b>Total who participated</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>25.7</b>

(a) People may have undertaken more than one activity.

(b) Aged 15 years and over.

Source: ABS, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey, 2002 (data available on request).

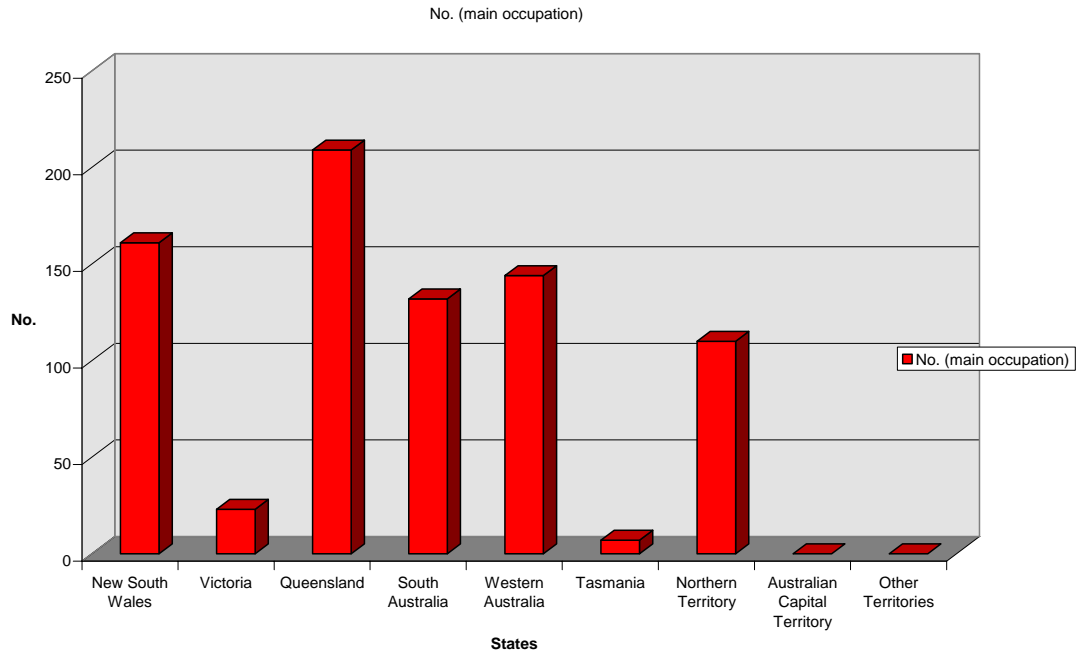
**Employment in Indigenous Visual Arts and Craft:**

In 2001, 20.5% of the national total of Indigenous people employed as visual art and craft professionals as their main occupation originated from NSW.

<b>Indigenous Visual Arts and Craft Professionals</b>	<b>No. (main occupation)</b>	<b>%</b>
New South Wales	161	20.5
Victoria	23	2.9
Queensland	209	26.6
South Australia	132	16.8
Western Australia	144	18.3
Tasmania	7	0.9
Northern Territory	110	14.0
Australian Capital Territory	0	0.0
Other Territories	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>100.0</b>

© Commonwealth of Australia, 2003

Source: ABS, 2001 Census of Population and Housing



2001 Census of Population and Housing, ABS

These population bases have direct impact on the nature of Indigenous visual arts and craft sector within NSW.

Regional distribution of Indigenous populations show a diverse composition ranging from large population centres within major cities such as Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong to inner and outer regional areas. These urban communities have very unique cultural profiles that have led to the development of a vibrant Indigenous urban art sector.

This sector encompasses a number of diverse themes that embody each artist's background and sharing a common thread through their Aboriginality. Within themes you will find commentary on Australian history, social interaction and political expression, as well as cultural transmission through the continuance of cultural and artistic traditions.

The scope of the Indigenous arts and craft sector within NSW is continually evolving with new initiatives that fall outside of the more established model framework of an "Indigenous Art Centre".

### **NSW Indigenous Art Centres:**

There has been a major movement in the development of various models of Indigenous art centres within NSW over the last six years. The Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Art's 'Indigenous Art Centres Directory 2006' lists fifteen art centres within NSW. (see Appendix A for greater detail)

These are as follows:

- **Aboriginal Cultural Centre Monaroo Bobberrer Gudu - Eden**
- **Armidale and Regional Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Keeping Place - Armidale**
- **Boolarng Nangamai Aboriginal Art and Culture Studio - Gerringong**
- **Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative - Sydney**
- **Budamurra Aboriginal Corporation - Ulladulla**
- **Euraba Paper Aboriginal Corporation – Toomelah.**
- **Ngurrala Aboriginal Corporation – Maxville**
- **Orana Aboriginal Corporation – Wellington.**
- **Shed Designs - South Grafton**
- **South Coast Aboriginal Cultural Centre - Nowra**
- **Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council - Buxton**
- **Tobwabba Art - Forster**
- **Ulugundahi Art and Culture Gallery - Maclean**
- **Umbarra Aboriginal Corporation - Akolele**
- **Yarrawarra Aboriginal Corporation - Corindi Beach**

In addition, a number of artist cooperatives are being established that have evolved from the development of a critical mass of artists within communities that in many cases are a result of TAFE programs. These artists identify the need for a cooperative approach to assist with issues such as advocacy and promotion. (see Appendix A for greater detail)

Artists cooperatives include:

- **Gamilarart – Tamworth**
- **Blue Mountains Aboriginal Arts Group**
- **Tenterfield Aboriginal Arts Group**
- **Northern Rivers NSW Indigenous Arts Business Hub.**
- **Kari Yalla Aboriginal Artists Co-operative – South Coast**
- **Junuys Youth Business Enterprise –Bowraville.**

## ***b) The economic, social and cultural benefits of the sector;***

### **Social Benefits:**

The measurement of the importance of arts in the social well being of Indigenous people through reconnection and continuance of cultural identity has been both sporadic and problematic.

It is hopeful the new draft Australian Bureau of Statistics directions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics with its identified strategic area *'Understanding and Measuring Indigenous Wellbeing'* will address this problem.

Within NSW there are a wide range of social based art programs to address social well being and early intervention. These programs endeavour to utilise visual arts to enable people to explore issues and build skills to improve social and economic opportunities.

Arts based programs delivered through agencies such as Department of Juvenile Justice are a part of wider developmental programs that have a general focus on personal development as well as specific activity based art programs for young offenders.

Funding support from the NSW Department of Community Services Area assistance scheme is aimed at promoting community well being and its functions and a number of Indigenous art based projects have been supported under this scheme.

### **Case Study: beyond.empathy - Mubali - Moree Indigenous Young Mothers Project**

#### **Funding Partners**

NSW Health  
NSW Aboriginal Maternal and Infancy Health Strategy.

#### **Project Partners**

The Gamilaroi Community Midwifery Service, Moree  
Hunter New England Health  
Families First Communities as Schools  
Moree Family Support  
Moree TAFE



Mubali – which means ‘pregnant’ in the Gamilaroi language – began in May 2004 and used an arts intervention process to improve the health of pregnant indigenous women, young mothers (15yrs – 25 yrs) and their babies in the Moree district. It stemmed from concern among local health services that this group of women was not getting access to pre-natal advice and often only sought medical assistance as their babies were being born.

*Beyond Empathy* was engaged to bring the women into early and regular contact with the Gamilaroi Community Midwifery Service at Moree Hospital.



At a series of visual art workshops held in a special room at Moree Base Hospital, the young women made and then painted plaster casts of their pregnant bellies, mentored by the artist’s aunties in the community. During these sessions the midwives and health professionals were able to give valuable messages about maternal and baby care, nutrition, mental health, dental health, parenting and breastfeeding. The ‘Aunties’, who are elders in the community, were part of the process.

The artworks and painted casts formed part of a popular exhibition at the Moree Plains Regional Gallery.

Of the first group of ten participants, nine were still breastfeeding 12 months later and the

average birth weight of their babies was significantly higher than those of babies born to women who had not been part of Mubali.

Significantly, the young participants are now better educated about pre- and post-natal care and are able to share important health messages with other pregnant women in their community.

The Mubali 'approach' has provided an effective means for the Moree midwives to connect with the young Indigenous women of their region, a group that previously rarely sought professional help for their pregnancies. The project now has a life of its own with the midwives using the Mubali method as part of their overall program of health care for new mothers in Moree.



Its success was recognised in October 2005 when NSW Health Minister John Hatzistergos presented the project with two State Government Health Department awards: the Consumer Participation Award and the Baxter Ministerial Award.

From Beyond Empathy website.  
<http://www.beyondempathy.org.au/>

### **Economic Benefits:**

The measurement of the economic benefits derived from the overall Indigenous arts and craft sector have been sporadic, relying at best on estimates based on gallery and Indigenous art auction sales. It is evident that a broader approach is needed that encompasses a wider market analysis that includes direct sales by artists and art centres, sales through the private gallery sector, commission based sales through the public gallery sector and e-commerce through online sales and eBay.

An additional need for NSW would be the extent of the NSW Indigenous art market within the context of the broader market. A particular emphasis would be a comparative analysis on sales of NSW based art to other Indigenous art through the major metropolitan private gallery sector.

### **Cultural Benefits:**

The cultural benefits of art to NSW Indigenous society can be seen through the maintenance and enhancement of regional cultural traditions. This important role in cultural preservation and transmission is facilitated as artists seek to develop their own artistic expression by finding inspiration through their culture.



This is undertaken through interaction with elders and cultural places as well as other forms of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage found in places such as keeping places and cultural centres, museums, galleries, libraries and archives.

When researching traditional cultural practices, artists also need to adhere to cultural protocols through acknowledgement that information may be communally owned and geographically specific, whilst other information may be culturally sensitive (i.e. certain images may only be viewed by women).

*My life and culture is just as valid and important as any other. I celebrate and promote my culture through my work as an artist and curator. The statement 'you have lost your culture' disturbs me as, in fact, it is an impossibility to lose your culture. What is being insinuated is that you are not living up to naive stereotypical ideas of Aboriginality. Urban Aboriginal culture is just as legitimate as any other culture and deserves the same respect and acknowledgment.*

Jonathan Jones, artist and curator,  
Wiradjuri/Gamilaroi

From Doing It Our Way, Arts NSW.

### **c) The overall financial, cultural and artistic sustainability of the sector;**

#### **Financial:**

At present, the NSW Indigenous art and craft sector has a limited capacity for financial sustainability. Although there is a range of funding sources available for the development of Indigenous art and craft from all levels of government, there is at present no real coordinated approach for funding models.

For artists and art centres to survive, Governments need to develop effective funding models that embrace frameworks such as Bilateral Agreements, Shared Responsibility Agreements, and the NSW Governments 'Two Ways Together' Aboriginal Affairs Plan.

These models need to encompass not only support for artistic endeavour of indigenous artists, but issues such as appropriate business model development and governance and effective marketing strategies

#### **Cultural:**

One of the great pressures upon the cultural sustainability of the NSW Indigenous arts and craft sector is the overall 'Indigenous Art Market'. The large presence and commanding prices obtained by some desert artists and the market pressures applied through stereotyping what Indigenous arts is, have led many Indigenous artists to adopt desert styles.

Arts NSW has produced a guide “Doing it Our Way – Contemporary Indigenous cultural expression in New South Wales” to outline the need for creative expression based on cultural inspiration over imitation.

However, a broader approach needs to be undertaken encompassing cultural practices and transmission and educational resources through areas such as TAFE courses and cultural mentoring.

### **Artistic:**

There are many possibilities for the artistic sustainability of NSW Indigenous artists, which can be highlighted by the recent developments in the cooperative approach many communities are undertaking. There is a vibrant indigenous art community being developed, through educational resources such as TAFE courses and encompassing various forms of visual art such as sculpture and new media.

#### ***Issues of Sustainability – A Recent Case Study***

Boomalli is the most significant urban Indigenous cooperative in Sydney. Following a severe storm, a recent flood at Boomalli’s gallery premises in Leichhardt highlights the limited capacity for this organisation to adequately respond to disaster. The gallery did not have a developed disaster plan in place prior to the flood. Their response to the flood was therefore expedient and unplanned, significantly compromising the operations of the gallery.

Immediately following the flood, it was apparent that the gallery’s offices, equipment and furniture were damaged beyond repair. These items were removed by the gallery’s insurer. Staff at Boomalli were without office space and the loss of office equipment rendered it impossible for a short period of time for the gallery to respond to correspondence, telephone calls and emails.

Boomalli’s flood illustrates the vulnerability of even the state’s most robust Indigenous art cooperative. It highlights the degree to which the resources of this organisation are stretched, to the extent that these resources must be focused on delivering its public programs at the expense of other standard museological considerations, such as disaster planning. In the event of a disaster, these resources were further stretched, beyond the galleries capacity.

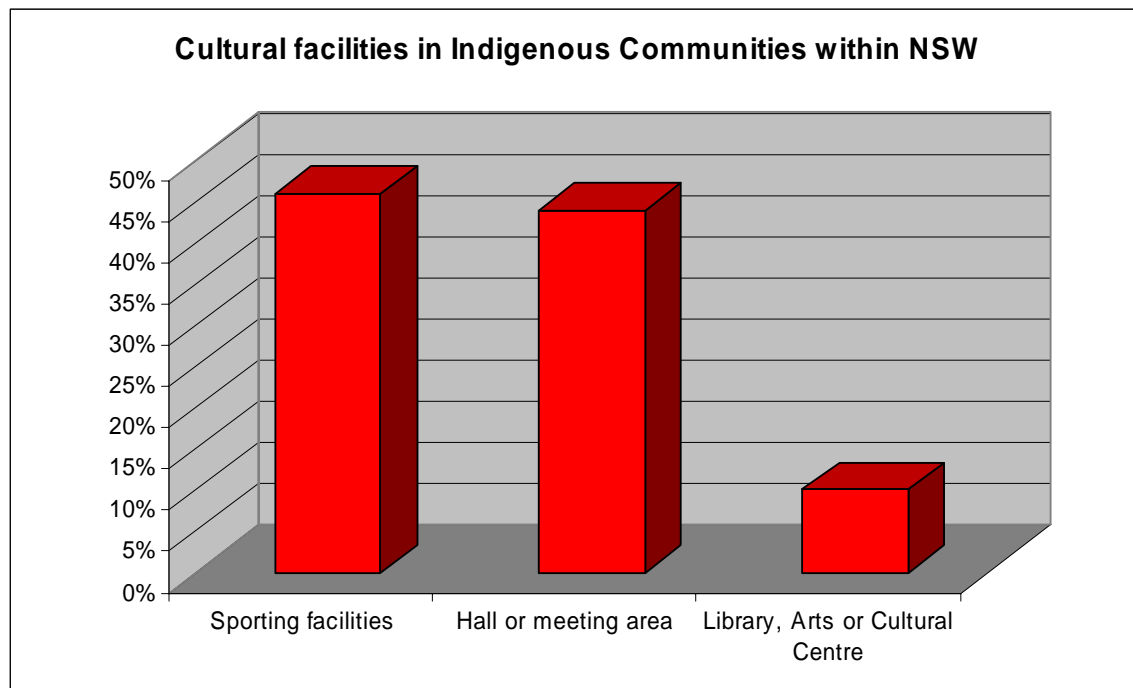
Staff at Boomalli succeeded in maintaining business-as-usual in their exhibition program during the recovery from the flood, keeping Boomalli’s doors open for their usual business hours. This is testament to the commitment and enthusiasm of Boomalli’s staff to their core mission to exhibit Indigenous art, despite the limitations of their other resources.

**d) The current and likely future priority infrastructure needs of the sector;**

**Cultural Facilities in Indigenous Communities**

The 2001 Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey found that there were 49 discrete Indigenous communities with 50 or more residents in New South Wales.

Of these communities, 23 of these communities had sporting facilities, 22 had a hall or meeting area, while 5 had a library, arts or cultural centre. This disparate level shows the need for infrastructure development for Indigenous arts within NSW.



2001 Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey, ABS.

The future infrastructure needs of the NSW Indigenous visual arts and craft sector are dependant on the various Indigenous arts and craft models developed. There are however four main priority areas;

- access to gallery and exhibition space
- access to production and workshop space
- access to culturally appropriate spaces
- utilisation of new technologies

**New Technologies.**

The utilisation of new technologies will enable Indigenous artists to market themselves on both a national and international front. This however places high infrastructure demands to adequately compete in this emerging area.

### **Case Study: Euraba Paper Company**

The Euraba Paper Company was founded in 1999 by Goomeroi women from Toomelah and Boggabilla Indigenous communities in north western NSW. It is the only Indigenous community to produce handmade, archival paper from local 100% cotton off-cuts.

For many of these women, it has been their first experience of full time employment. Their immediate challenge is to become commercially viable, in order to realise their vision of long term local training and employment.

In 2000, Euraba Paper Company formed a partnership with Global Internet networking company, Cisco Systems to assist with the provision of office equipment and contribute the development of a website that will give information about their products and make e-commerce possible. Cisco will also assist with finding new markets through their networks, hosting functions and developing marketing materials.

Euraba Paper was also able to secure the services of CyberDreaming, Australia's leading Indigenous Multimedia company for their generous involvement in creating their web site.

### **e) *Opportunities for strategies and mechanisms that the sector could adopt to improve its practices, capacity and sustainability, including to deal with unscrupulous or unethical conduct;***

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Arts NSW is the lead agency for the *Two Ways Together Aboriginal Affairs Plan* NSW Indigenous arts and cultural expression strategy.

This strategy will be designed to uphold the guiding principles of the broader *Two Ways Together* plan by helping build partnerships between Aboriginal people and the NSW Government in the interests of strengthening Aboriginal leadership, economic independence and cultural and social well being.

The Strategy will have four key driving elements:

**Community Engagement** through the development of assessable community skills development pathways to enhance levels of proficiency within Aboriginal communities. These would range from local community levels to high end international standards and encompass existing education based resources in conjunction with the development of mentoring roles for both key Aboriginal and mainstream organisations.

**Economic Sustainability** through the support and protection of a vibrant NSW Aboriginal cultural and arts sector. This will be achieved through the ongoing development of culturally appropriate NSW cultural and arts export and marketing strategies.

**Cultural & Social impact** through the development of programs that focus on cultural transmission, expression and participation and social capacity building through early intervention and reconnection with cultural identity.

**Connecting Government Programs** at all levels through effective integrated strategies. Identifying and linking cross-over opportunities with other sectors such as education, sport & recreation and health.

### **Support for the development of the Indigenous Intellectual Property Toolkit**

Arts NSW is supportive of the Cultural Ministers Council project for the development of the national Indigenous Intellectual Property (IIP) Toolkit which is viewed as a practical and effective way of increasing awareness and promoting good practice in managing Indigenous intellectual property.

It is hoped that this project will be able to streamline access and awareness to existing support organisations and programs such as the following:

- Arts Law Centre of Australia “Artists in the Black”
- VISCOPY
- National Association for the Visual Arts – NAVA

**f) *Opportunities for existing government support programs for Indigenous visual arts and crafts to be more effectively targeted to improve the sector’s capacity and future sustainability.***

### **Arts NSW support for the NSW Indigenous visual arts and craft sector.**

In the last five years (2002 – 2006), the Visual Arts and Craft (VAC) program at Arts NSW has funded 42 applications that specifically relate to Indigenous visual arts, totalling \$541,326. These applications variously cover program costs, projects, staff establishment, multiyear funding, strategic initiatives, special initiatives, artists, touring and acquisitions.

The breakdown of VAC program grants for specifically Indigenous applications for years 2002 – 2006 is thus:

- 2002 – The VAC program funded 6 Indigenous visual arts applications, totalling \$51,940
- 2003 – The VAC program funded 10 Indigenous visual arts applications, totalling \$79,189
- 2004 – The VAC program funded 17 Indigenous visual arts applications, totalling \$162,197
- 2005 – The VAC program funded 2 Indigenous visual arts applications, totalling \$85,000

- 2006 – The VAC program funded 7 Indigenous visual arts applications, totalling \$163,000

### **Case Study: 2006 Indigenous Arts Fellowship**

The biennial NSW Indigenous Arts Fellowship valued at \$15,000 has been awarded to visual artist Mr. Joe Hurst.

The award was presented to Mr. Hurst at a function at the Sydney Town Hall by the NSW Minister for the Arts, the Hon Bob Debus, and the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore MP.

Mr. Hurst will use the fellowship towards a multilayered project of three stages. The first part will involve the artist in a professional skills development program in computer graphics, imaging and publication. This will be followed by his research in remote areas of western NSW to study natural and man-made landforms and features as well as related Aboriginal stories. The final stage will involve creating a sculptural artwork based on this research.

He will travel to western NSW part of which is located in his own tribal area - Muruwari. He will visit Culgoa, Macquarie Marshes, Gundabooka, Mutawintji, Kinchega and Mungo National Parks and their nearby communities.

Mr. Hurst has worked as a visual artist for over twenty years and has produced a body of work in a range of visual media. He has worked in sculpture, design, photography, painting and community cultural development. He has also undertaken a diverse range of well known public works having designed the Sea of Hands installation for reconciliation and the Olympics in Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens. One of his large Mimi sculptures is displayed at the Powerhouse Museum.

Mr. Hurst has also exhibited internationally and notably several of his artworks are held in the NSW Parliament collection. He was the first Aboriginal artist in residence at the Bundanon retreat.

It is anticipated that the proposed artwork will make a valued contribution to the broader visual arts landscape of Indigenous sculpture in New South Wales and highlight not only Mr. Hurst's rich multi-disciplinary contribution to Indigenous visual arts and but also the positive contribution made to the City of Sydney and New South Wales by Indigenous artists.

The NSW Indigenous Arts Fellowship was established in 1996 to assist Indigenous artists to further develop their professional careers. The fellowship is co-funded by Arts NSW and the City of Sydney.

## **NSW public galleries**

Arts NSW supports the programs and operations of public galleries in NSW, which includes significant Indigenous content. A brief survey of the Indigenous visual arts in the public galleries of NSW shows a strong representation of Indigenous content, programs and strategies, in general. This is certainly one of the strengths of this sector in NSW. (See Appendix B for greater detail on NSW public galleries support)

## **Museums and Galleries NSW.**

Arts NSW funds the leading development agency for the museum and gallery sector in NSW, Museums & Galleries NSW (MGnsw). MGnsw is committed to the principles of Indigenous protocols that have been developed to support ways of using Indigenous cultural material, and interacting with Indigenous people and their communities. MGnsw aims to support, recognise and promote Indigenous cultural expression and work and actively build collaborative partnerships, constructive relationships and communication between Indigenous Australians and the regional museum and gallery sector.

This is achieved through:

- highly successful tours of contemporary Indigenous visual art exhibitions
- building valuable strategic partnerships with a wide range of arts spaces, artist run initiatives, craft organisations, Keeping Places, Indigenous organisations, state cultural institutions and cultural centres engaged in developing and presenting contemporary visual arts and craft
- increased professionalism in the sector with the delivery to the conferences, masterclasses, symposia and workshops that address Indigenous cultural protocols

(See Appendix C for list of MGnsw Indigenous Programs)

## **The Parliament of NSW Indigenous art prize and regional tour.**

In 2005, the Parliament of NSW and the Campbelltown Arts Centre, with support from Arts NSW organised the inaugural *Parliament of NSW Indigenous Art Prize*, a **\$20 000** acquisitive prize for Indigenous artists born or living in NSW.

In 2006, the expansion of this prize saw 39 works selected to be exhibited at the NSW Parliament from 4<sup>th</sup> October to 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

In addition, 2006 featured two new initiatives;

- College of Fine Arts (COFA) Professional Development Award sponsored by the College of Fine Arts, UNSW which includes a two week residency and solo exhibition at EPS Gallery, COFA.
- regional tour for 2007, co-ordinated by Museums and Galleries NSW to regional galleries in Bega, Cowra, Coffs Harbour and Kempsey.

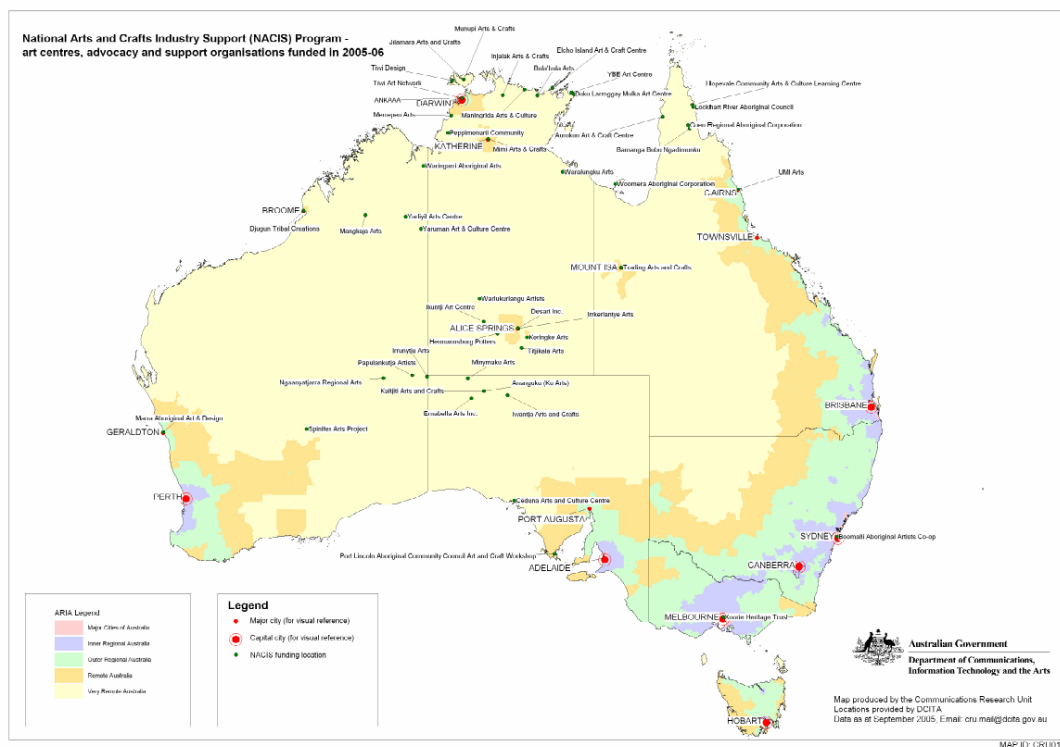
## Commonwealth program support for the NSW Indigenous visual arts and craft sector.

### Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA).

The National Arts and Crafts Industry Support (NACIS) program provides direct funding support to Indigenous art centres and arts support and advocacy organisations. The program's overall objectives are to assist art centres to become stronger and to build a more sustainable Indigenous visual arts industry.

To achieve these objectives, NACIS funding assists organisations to:

- strengthen governance and business management practices in the industry;
- provide opportunities for artists to maintain, develop and extend their professional art practice; and
- provide opportunities for arts workers to develop professional skills and experience.



Funding for the NACIS program in 2005/06 (as shown above in the above map supplied by DCITA) raises particular concerns for the NSW Indigenous art and craft sector. The disparity between funding levels within NSW comparative to some other states identifies the need for a wider strategic approach for assistance to the NSW sector.



## **Australia Council for the Arts**

The Indigenous Art Centre Program administered by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Division of the Australia Council is a part of the broader Visual Arts and Craft Strategy that was created in response to the Contemporary Visual Arts and Craft Inquiry by Rupert Myer.

This three year initiative aims to assist Indigenous art centres through supporting the following:

- Artform based skills development in visual arts for Indigenous artists & arts workers
- Professional development opportunities for Indigenous committee members in governance training, management & planning
- Freight, advertising, artists representation at exhibitions
- Purchase of high quality art materials and resources for artists
- Workshops, cultural camps where the primary purpose is the transfer of traditional knowledge from Elders/Senior community members to young people
- Advertising and/or promotional costs for exhibitions
- Costs to establish an effective documentation or collection management system within the Art Centre.

It is evident that the continuation of this important initiative is required for the ongoing development of the Indigenous Visual art and Craft sector. However, investigation into greater coordination and/or consolidation with DCITA's NACIS program should be undertaken to develop a more effective model.

## **New approach of Government Support:**

The NSW Aboriginal Affairs plan 'Two Ways Together' outlines a policy framework aimed at delivering a "Whole of Government" to approach to Aboriginal issues within NSW.

Under this plan, Arts NSW is the lead agency for the development of a NSW Indigenous Arts and Cultural Expression strategy. This strategy aims to develop effective integrated strategies to identify and link cross-government opportunities through not only existing programs and funding but more importantly to develop new initiatives.

Areas under consideration are:

- Education and Training pathway development through Schools, NSW TAFE and Universities.
- Greater awareness of NSW Indigenous arts and craft through development and support of promotional programs such as Indigenous visual arts exhibitions (investigation of support for the greater utilisation of 'Visions Australia' program by NSW Indigenous Arts sector.
- Development of NSW Indigenous visual arts and craft advocacy through Indigenous protocols appropriate to specific projects, collections, regions and

communities and the increased awareness and understanding of issues surrounding authenticity; attribution; and copyright.

- Greater utilisation of existing visual arts infrastructure through the NSW regional art gallery sector through the establishment of Indigenous curatorial/education positions for small to medium size galleries and museums, ongoing training opportunities through workshops and master-classes and publication of 'best practice' case studies for engagement with Indigenous artists and communities

**g) *Future opportunities for further growth of Australia's Indigenous visual arts and craft sector, including through further developing international markets.***

The development of a NSW Indigenous Arts and Cultural Expression strategy will investigate the development of culturally appropriate NSW cultural and arts export and marketing strategies. This approach has scope to identify existing initiatives such as the NSW State and Regional Development's Aboriginal Business programs such as the "Aboriginal Business Link program", Austrade export support and Australia Councils' "Showcasing the Best" to develop an effective support base for the NSW Indigenous art sector to break into new market areas.

**Case Study – Terrence Allen Jnr.**

An Indigenous artist from Tamworth is exploring international markets with support from the NSW Government.

Terry Allen now has five artworks on show at the Australian Art Fest which has just opened in Toronto, Canada. The Australian Art Fest was launched on October 18 with a special viewing for more than 200 private collectors. The exhibition potentially opens up a huge new market for Mr Allen who has mostly been exhibiting in Australia.

Toronto has a population of five million and is regarded as having a diverse and vibrant art scene.

Mr Allen, who paints in acrylic on canvas, is one of 10 artists invited to participate in this special exhibition which will showcase Australian art and culture to the Canadian market.

The NSW Government's Aboriginal Business Link program has helped with the freight and insurance costs of transporting Mr Allen's artworks to Canada.

Mr Allen said he was looking forward to having his works seen by Canadians who have mostly had little exposure to Australian art. "I believe the best potential for my work lies overseas, so the opportunity to have five paintings seen, and possibly sold, in Canada will be a great boost," he said.

*From: DSRD Business Update – October 2006.*

### **Musee du Quai Branly – Australian Indigenous Art Commission.**

The Australian Government's investment into the \$1.7 million Australian Indigenous art commission at the Musee du Quai Branly brings together the largest ever public art commission of Indigenous Australian artwork.

In May 2006, Senator the Hon. Rod Kemp announced that "*The museum has the potential to raise significantly the profile of Indigenous art in Europe and enhance market opportunities for Australian Indigenous artists.*"

The effectiveness of this initiative in enhancing market opportunities should be clarified with appropriate levels evaluation to ascertain if a suitable model can be established that allows entry into other emerging market areas.

## **Opportunities for the Indigenous visual arts and craft sector:**

- Adequate recognition and support for urban and inner regional indigenous populations under existing and future programs of support for Indigenous visual arts and craft.
- Appropriate and proportionate support to enable Indigenous visual arts and craft to take place in areas of relocation, and to be acknowledged and recognised as relevant and valid forms of art form practice is critical to the achievement of COAG goals for social reform in Indigenous affairs and for the Cultural Ministers Council's foremost priority under its 2006 Framework for National Cooperation.
- Development of a wider strategic approach of DCITA's NACIS program to address the disparity between funding levels within NSW comparative to other states.
- Support for continuance of the Visual arts and craft strategy administered by the Australia Council with greater coordination and/or consolidation with DCITA's NACIS program for the development of a more effective model.
- Support for infrastructure needs of new emerging models of 'art centres' that exist within urban and regional communities within four main priority areas;
  - access to gallery and exhibition space
  - access to production and workshop space
  - access to culturally appropriate spaces
  - utilisation of new technologies
- Support for the implementation of the Cultural Ministers Council project for the development of the national Indigenous Intellectual Property (IIP) Toolkit.
- Support for the development of a 'Whole of Government' approach to education and training pathway development through schools, vocational training and universities.
- Support for the development of a 'Whole of Government' approach for the development of NSW Indigenous visual arts and craft advocacy through Indigenous protocols appropriate to specific projects, collections, regions and communities and the increased awareness and understanding of issues surrounding authenticity; attribution; and copyright.
- Support for the development of a 'Whole of Government' approach towards greater utilisation of existing visual arts infrastructure through the NSW regional art gallery sector achieved through the establishment of

**Indigenous curatorial/education positions for small to medium size galleries and museums, ongoing training opportunities through workshops and master-classes and publication of 'best practice' case studies for engagement with Indigenous artists and communities.**

- **Undertake analysis of the effectiveness of existing export and market support programs to ascertain if suitable models can be established that allows entry into other emerging market areas.**

## **Appendix A:**

### **List of NSW Indigenous Art Centres and Cooperatives.**

#### **Aboriginal Cultural Centre Monaroo Bobberrer Gudu - Eden**

Monaroo Bobberrer Gudu means 'the peoples of the mountains and the sea'. The centre supports local artists and is also Eden's Aboriginal Keeping Place. The centre sells artworks created by local artists including paintings, artefacts, clothing, textiles and ceramics.

#### **Armidale and Regional Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Keeping Place - Armidale**

This centre displays art and artefacts and sells locally manufactured clothing, paintings and other items.

#### **Boolarng Nangamai Aboriginal Art and Culture Studio - Gerringong**

The Boolarng Nangamai Aboriginal Art and Culture Studio conducts workshops in weaving, painting, drawing, bush tucker, tool making, bush toy making and dance, didgeridoo playing and story telling.

#### **Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative - Sydney**

Boomalli is Australia's oldest Aboriginal owned and operated metropolitan-based artist cooperative. The centre services many urban and rural based artists, particularly those from New South Wales and provide a retail outlet and gallery space for Indigenous artists nationally. Items available include paintings (acrylic on canvas), works on paper (prints, etchings, linocuts, gouache, watercolours and pastels), photographic prints, ceramics, jewellery, woodwork (coolamons, nulla nullas and carved animals), and textiles and clothing (printed lengths and t-shirts).

#### **Budamurra Aboriginal Corporation - Ulladulla**

This corporation provides guided cultural tours. It also has a gallery showcasing traditional and contemporary arts including paintings (acrylic on canvas and on board), printed works of original paintings on paper and cards, ceramics (pots and plates), woodwork (picture frames, boomerangs, spears, clap sticks, woomearas, coolamons and shields). The centre can make goods to order.

#### **Euraba Paper Aboriginal Corporation – Toomelah.**

Euraba Paper Company was the first Indigenous business in Australia to make elite, handmade paper at a mass production level. The process involves locally and traditionally sourced fibres being made into sheets of paper and paper products for a range of commercial uses. The company also produce artworks on paper.

#### **Ngurrala Aboriginal Corporation – Maxville**

Ngurrala offers a range of services to artists from the Gumbaynggir region of New South Wales. Items available include works on canvas, woodwork (carvings and furniture), clothing and jewellery. It is open Monday to Friday, 9-00 am to 5-00 pm (phone first).

#### **Orana Aboriginal Corporation – Wellington.**

Items available from this corporation include paintings (some using beads and bark, acrylic on canvas) and a wide range of ceramics and woodwork.

### **Shed Designs - South Grafton**

Shed Designs is a collective of three female Gumbaynggir artists of the Clarence River area. The original designs are reflections of each artist's personal and spiritual growth, expressing a combination of oral and environmental histories. A range of ceramics (vases, platters, coolamons and bowls) are available.

### **South Coast Aboriginal Cultural Centre - Nowra**

This centre supports local artists to produce beaded jewellery (necklaces, bracelets and earrings), shell-worked knick-knacks and paintings (acrylic on canvas).

### **Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council - Buxton**

#### **Tobwabba Art - Forster**

Tobwabba Art is an art gallery and retail shop displaying the contemporary artworks of the coastal Worimi people. Items available include textiles and clothing (t-shirts, scarves and sarongs), woodwork (coolamons, clap sticks, boomerangs, hunting spears, carved figures and woomearas), jewellery and paintings (acrylic on canvas).

### **Ulugundahi Art and Culture Gallery - Maclean**

#### **Umbarra Aboriginal Corporation - Akolele**

Umbarra is on the far south coast of New South Wales and offers local Aboriginal cultural tours, activities for children, and a shop and display area with local artefacts. Items available include clothing (t-shirts, hats and scarves), woodwork (didgeridoos, clap sticks and boomerangs) and jewellery. It is open Monday to Friday, 9-00 am to 5-00 pm, and weekends, 9-00 am to 4-00 pm.

#### **Yarrawarra Aboriginal Corporation - Corindi Beach**

All the artwork and artefacts handled by this corporation are produced and hand-painted by the local Gumbaynggir people. Available works include ceramics and woodwork.

#### **Gamilarart**

Gamilarart is located in Tamworth and was formed by a local group of students, who came together in the pursuit of their love of "Art", and by uniting Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Artists they have been able to put true Reconciliation into practice.

#### **Blue Mountains Aboriginal Arts Group**

A newly formed Blue Mountains Aboriginal Arts Group informally known as the Artist Mob has already had some successes. Graham King, a Blue Mountains artist won the COFA Professional Development Award at the NSW Parliament Indigenous Arts Prize 2006. In addition to this, five Blue Mountains Artists were selected as Finalists for the NSW Parliament Art Exhibition.

They are currently working with the Local Council to obtain Gallery Space and undertake some strategic and business planning.

#### **Tenterfield:**

A consortium of the Local Tenterfield Aboriginal Community and surrounding district are currently investigating the development of a business model for the through the manufacture and distribution of Local Authentic Aboriginal Arts & Crafts.

This group has held a number of meetings with a range of government agencies and departments where project scoping has been undertaken to identify how this project will benefit the Tenterfield Community and what resources / support are required.

### **Northern Rivers NSW Indigenous Arts Business Hub.**

A regional forum for Indigenous artists from the northern rivers area of NSW was held in mid 2005, with the aim to identify the needs and issues facing Indigenous artists in the region. A guest speaker, high profile Indigenous art curator, Djon Mundine, gave an inspiring presentation focussing on Indigenous arts practice.

From this meeting the formation of Indigenous Artist Advisory Group (IAAG) was undertaken with the key needs and issues affecting artists identified. These were:

- **Place** – a base or location with a gallery and workshop space which enables artists to undertake their work,
- **Communication** – improved communication between Indigenous artists in the region
- **Database** – of Indigenous artists in the region to enable the promotion of opportunities, exhibitions and events
- **Website** – to promote and sell work of local Indigenous artists
- **Legal Assistance And Advice** – relating to copyright, intellectual and cultural property, consignment agreements etc. Workshops were identified as a way to address this need.
- **Marketing Assistance And Workshops** – an arts support worker was identified as the best way to assist with marketing and facilitating workshops in areas of professional development, marketing and promotion
- **Link To Correctional Services** - support for Indigenous artists released from Grafton Prison
- **Mentoring** – exchange of skills and knowledge from established artists to young people, as a way of building self confidence as well as supporting emerging artists with their arts practice.

The Artist Advisory Group has developed in conjunction with Arts Northern Rivers a strategic plan with the short term goal of seeking funding for an arts worker to support artists through workshops, forums and marketing assistance, and in the longer term, to form an artist run organisation and establish a space for artists to work and exhibit.

### **Kari Yalla Aboriginal Artists Co-operative**

Kari Yalla is an Aboriginal Artists Co-operative for the South East that has been established in the past year and is auspiced by South East Arts Region Arts (SEAR). SEAR has assisted in the formation of this structure as a regional mechanism to support Aboriginal artists of the South East and to provide a structure for professional development, Aboriginal management and receipt of funding.



Kari Yalla's boundaries range from Batemans Bay to the Victorian border and comprises of a regional structure that is managed by the Aboriginal community for the professional development and promotion of Aboriginal artists.

They have already had a number of exhibitions, and **in July 2006**, an exhibition of works produced by local Aboriginal artists as part of mentorship with Sydney-based Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative artist, Jeffrey Samuels was shown in Bega.

Boomalli worked with the Kari Yalla Aboriginal Artists Coop in Eden and the Bega Valley Regional Gallery to deliver a series of hands-on workshops over six months for eight local artists under the program with grant from the Australian Government's Regional Arts Fund. The workshops incorporated hands-on work, critiques and discussion. Tutors included Cecile Galiazzo from the Megalo print organisation (Canberra) as well as other local artists and Mr Samuels.

### **Junuys Youth Business Enterprise**

The Junuys Youth Business Enterprise (JYBE), a part of Bawrunga Aboriginal Medical Service, was initiated in March 2004 as a youth business enterprise for combating youth unemployment and building self-esteem through the development of arts /crafts and arts business skills.

Work produced by the enterprise comprises both traditional and contemporary artworks on canvas, jewellery, the manufacture and painting of boomerangs, clap sticks, recycled furniture and other objects. Sale of these works occurs throughout the region at local markets, exhibitions and through their own shop located at the Bowraville workshops.

The JYBE project is currently developing strategies to become a self-sustaining business through commercial production and distribution to educational and tourist markets.

## **Appendix B:**

### **NSW public galleries support of Indigenous visual arts and craft.**

A number of public galleries in NSW have structured and strategic approaches to the programming of Indigenous content. For example, Campbelltown Arts Centre, in western Sydney, has recently appointed Djon Mundine to the full-time position of Indigenous Contemporary Art Curator, which is assisted by Arts NSW through a VAC program staff establishment grant that covers 50% of the positions costs for the first three years. Campbelltown Arts Centre are also a managing partner in the Parliament of NSW Indigenous Art Award and the tour of this exhibition to regional NSW; there is an Indigenous category in the Centre's annual Fishers Ghost Art Award; they commissioned Indigenous artist Adam Hill to develop a major public artwork for Lend Lease in Macarthur Square, Campbelltown and they are currently developing a major Indigenous residency & exhibition project, commissions of Indigenous works and a Regional Indigenous Arts Strategy for the Centre is currently in consultation stage.

Also in western Sydney, Blacktown has the largest Indigenous population in NSW. Blacktown Arts Centre actively supports local Indigenous visual arts activity through the development of exhibitions, public art, assistance in the development of indigenous artist cooperatives and the establishment of Indigenous prizes within local art competitions.

Another area with a large Indigenous population, but in remote NSW, is Moree. The North West slopes and plains around Moree has been home to the Kamilaroi people for thousands of years. The Moree Plains Gallery runs workshops for TAFE, especially for local Indigenous students. The Gallery is also in the process of establishing a keeping place for significant and Kamilaroi artefacts, weapons, tools and carved stones. In 2007, the Gallery will commence a 12-month traineeship program an emerging Indigenous curator.

Other galleries have in place Indigenous visual arts strategies, such as the Engaging Indigenous Audiences strategy at Manning Regional Art Gallery in Taree. This is a comprehensive strategy, which includes projects such as research into the traditional local Indigenous art. This involved research into private collections, government collections and records, newspapers and the local Aboriginal community collections. The results were made into a CD ROM, which has been given back to the people of the Aboriginal community, AIATSIS, local, state and national galleries, libraries and museums schools.

Grafton Regional Gallery identifies that the greatest problem with supporting the artists is the payment of artist fees, the payment of travelling costs and accommodation to bring in artists for workshops and seminars. The Gallery uses the Arts NSW cultural programs to access artist fees, catalogue costs and speakers' fees. However travelling and accommodation costs are significant; and it is a cost that metropolitan galleries do not need to bear.

## Appendix C:

<b>MGnsw Indigenous Programs</b>			
<b>Touring Exhibitions</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of venues</b>	<b>Total attendance</b>
NSW Parliament House Indigenous Art Prize	2006 - 07	4	n/a
Luminous: Contemporary Art from the Western Desert	2005 - 06	8	14,695 for five venues
From the Edge	2005 - 06	2	6411
Terra Alterius: Land of Another	2005 - 06	6	6503
Pallingjang Saltwater III	2004	4	5733
<b>Masterclasses/symposia</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Total attendance</b>
Introducing Indigenous Protocols for producing contemporary art and craft	20 October 2003	New England Regional Art Museum, Armidale	56
Practising Protocols	15 October 2004	Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery	51
Indigenous Protocols Workshop	9 November 2005	Wagga Wagga Art Gallery	25
New Protocols: Dialogues across cultures presented as part of Leading from the Edge: 2005 Public Galleries Summit	11 November 2005	Wagga Wagga Art Gallery	200
Confronting the Collection	2000	NERAM; Armidale Keeping Place	n/a
<b>Publications</b>	<b>Year</b>		<b>Distribution</b>
Session papers New Protocols: Dialogues across cultures	September 2006		500
Cultural Protocols – Indigenous Welcome to Country	April 2001		n/a
<b>Mentorship</b>			
Daryl Tighe, Gallery Assistant, Moree Plains Gallery	2001	Art Gallery of New South Wales	