DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
*Faculty of Business and Economics*

MACQUARIE University

# Integrating Art Production and Economic Development in the Central Desert (NT) and the APY Lands (SA)

## NATIONAL SURVEY OF REMOTE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ARTISTS

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Department of Economics, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.

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## PREFACE

This Report presents the results of a study that forms one component of a major National Survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists. The National Survey is being undertaken in the Department of Economics at Macquarie University progressively across seven regions in remote Australia. The regions are:

Region 1: Kimberley, WA
Region 2: East and West Arnhem Land, NT
Region 3: Tiwi Islands and North-west NT
Region 4: Central Desert, NT and APY Lands, SA
Region 5: Pilbara and Western Desert, WA
Region 6: Far North Queensland

Implementation of the National Survey in Region 1 was completed in 2016,[1] with the rollout continuing in Regions 2–4 during 2017, 2018 and 2019. The exact area to be covered in Region 5 is still to be finalised. Implementation in Region 6 is subject to funding approvals.

The present Report relates to the implementation of the National Survey in Region 4: Central Desert NT and APY Lands SA. An initial scoping trip to the region was undertaken in July 2017, and the main fieldwork was carried out between March and May 2018, as discussed in more detail in the Report.

We would like to express our gratitude to a number of individuals and organisations who assisted us in various ways in the conduct of this work. Firstly, we acknowledge the financial support provided by the Commonwealth Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, the Australia Council for the Arts, Arts NT and Arts SA. A number of people in these departments and agencies were especially helpful, including Debra Myers (PM&C), Lisa Walsh and Rebecca Mostyn (Australia Council for the Arts), Angela Hill and Renita Glencross (Arts NT), Hugo Leschen (formerly Arts NT), and Jennifer Layther and Jared Thomas (Arts SA). We also express our gratitude to Sally Basser, Stephen Arnott, Jane Barney, Lyn Allan, Ingrid Barnes, Jacqueline Gropp, Sonia Hailes and Karen Bell in the Commonwealth Department of Communications and the Arts for their advice and encouragement at all stages of this project.

The collaboration of a number of Aboriginal artists, cultural consultants, translators and interpreters was an essential ingredient in designing and implementing the survey, including Gloria Pannka, Joy Kunia, Mervyn Rubuntja, Kathleen Wallace Kemarre, Clifford Brown, Donovan Rice, Keturah Zimran, Gloria Moneymoon, Selina Kulitja, Marissa Thompson, Rachael Lionel, Inawinytji Stanley, Ingrid Treacle, Virgillia Multa, Loira Heffernan, Noreen Dixon, Linda Puna and Graham Umala.

We would also like to thank the managers and staff of art centres and other organisations in the region who cooperated with us and assisted in implementing the survey, including Jeff Bruer (PAW Media, Yuendumu), Joy Kunia (Areyonga Community Arts Centre, Areyonga), Gabrielle Wallington (Hermannsburg Potters, Hermannsburg), Ted Lawrence (Tjuwanpa Outstation Resource Centre, Hermannsburg), Joanne Byrne (Papunya Tjupi Arts, Papunya), Cecilia Alfonso and Gloria Morales (Warlukurlangu Art Centre, Yuendumu), Dr Chrischona Schmidt (Ikuntji Artists, Haasts Bluff), Rohan Smith (Catholic Care NT, Darwin/Alice Springs), Iris Bendor (Ngurratjuta Many Hands Art Centre, Alice Springs), Ruth Macmillan

[1] See David Throsby and Ekaterina Petetskaya, *Integrating Art Production and Economic Development in the Kimberley* (Macquarie University Economics Research Paper No. 2/2016, November 2016).

(Tangentyere and Town Camp Artists, Alice Springs), Karl Bajzik (Yubu Napa Gallery, Alice Springs), Daniel Featherstone, (Indigenous Remote Communications Association – IRCA, Alice Springs), Jeremy Conlon and Liz Archer (Music NT, Darwin/Alice Springs), Michelle Young and Ananda Taylor (Tjanpi Desert Weavers, Alice Springs), Anna Wattler (Mimili Maku Arts, Mimili), Benji Bradley (Tjungu Palya Arts, Nyapari), Beverley Peacock and Gillian Steel (Kaltjiti Arts, Fregon), Geoff Pryor, (NPY Women's Council, Amata), Katrina Langdon (Tjala Arts, Amata), Hannah Kothe and Mel George (Ernabella Arts, Pukatja), Clive Scollay (Maruku Arts, Mutitjulu), Nicola Gracie and Jessie Stewart, (Walkatjara Arts, Uluru), and Tom Holder (PY Media, Umuwa).

We would like to thank the board directors, members and Chief Executive Officer of Desart, for their assistance and encouragement through different stages of this survey. In particular, we thank the Desart CEO, Philip Watkins, for his invaluable support.

Particular acknowledgement is due to Dr Chrischona Schmidt, who assisted in the planning and implementation of the fieldwork and attended a number of stakeholder meetings as the study progressed. In addition, she read a draft of this report and provided extensive feedback and comments.

The survey interviews were conducted jointly by the two present authors together with Dr Hayley Megan French, Dr Fabiola Barba Ponce and Dr Chrischona Schmidt, supported by the translators and interpreters mentioned above.

We also acknowledge the financial and administrative support and cooperation provided by Macquarie University. In particular, we are very grateful for the editorial input and the administrative assistance at all stages of the project provided by Laura Billington in the Department of Economics at Macquarie University.

Finally, we express our sincere gratitude to all the Central Desert and APY Lands artists who gave up their time to participate as interviewees in this survey and its piloting in 2017 and 2018.

In expressing our thanks to all the above, we make it clear that responsibility for the content of this Report and for the views expressed is entirely our own.

David Throsby
Katya Petetskaya
April 2019

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report presents the results of a study that forms one component of a major National Survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists. The National Survey is being undertaken in the Department of Economics at Macquarie University progressively across six regions in remote Australia. The present Report relates to the implementation of the National Survey in Region 4: Central Desert NT and APY Lands SA.

### Background

The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyse the extent to which art and cultural production can provide a viable pathway towards economic empowerment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in remote towns, settlements, homelands and outstations across the Central Desert/APY Lands region. These are areas where cultural production has the potential to be one of the most important means for providing a viable, sustainable and culturally-relevant livelihood for members of the community.

### Art and cultural production in remote communities

*Analytical framework*

The model of the Indigenous art and cultural economy that we propose extends the conventional three-sector model (comprising a government sector, a commercial sector, and a non-profit "third" sector) by overlaying a fourth sector, a community/family sector, that has interactions with all three. Organisations operating within this economy can be seen as examples of "hybrid" organisations, which overlap and share services – art centres and ranger organisations are examples. Our focus in this study is on the individual artist or cultural producer who lives and works within this economy. He or she is placed at the centre of the system, engaging in cultural production and cultural transmission as an individual operating within all four sectors.

*Employment and unemployment*

An essential concern of this study is with the prospects for employment creation through art and cultural production. Efforts have been made by successive governments to deal with the lack of jobs and job training in remote areas. The Community Development Program (CDP) and equivalent programs represent one approach to tackling employment problems, an approach involving identification of skill shortages and training provision for potential job creation. An alternative is to recognise that significant skills and even employment opportunities already exist, which can be utilised in creating incomes. Such an approach would seek to expand existing opportunities proven to be working, rather than creating new ones from scratch.

*Remoteness issues*

Today 44 percent of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander people from remote and very remote areas Australia-wide live outside large communities and hub settlements and in small homelands/outstations. Another 40 percent visit homelands/outstations from time to time. It can be shown that there are many economic, health, social and cultural benefits that living in smaller outstations/homelands can provide. At the same time living remotely does not mean a lack of engagement with the outside world. Artists who work from these locations also travel or send their work Australia-wide and internationally, and cultural tourism brings people from all over the world to places where Indigenous culture can be experienced in the most direct and authentic way.

*Mapping remote Indigenous cultural production*

In the survey, mapping of cultural-economic activities that contribute to art and cultural production was undertaken by the research team in July 2017. The mapping exercise classified the major cultural-economic activities into the following categories (1) creative artistic activities and (2) cultural maintenance and applied cultural activities, referred to simply as "other cultural activities". The activities identified are defined as follows:

> *Creative artistic activities*: Visual arts; Performing arts; Composing or choreographing; Writing or storytelling; Making a film, TV or radio program, or multimedia work.
>
> *Cultural maintenance and applied cultural activities*: Teaching others in arts and cultural activities; Caring for country; Being on a cultural board, committee or council; Interpreting, translating or cross-cultural consulting; Making Indigenous medicines or cosmetics or providing Indigenous health services; Fishing, hunting, collecting or preparing bush food; Participating in ceremonies; Providing cultural tourism services; Arts administration; Arts management; Cultural archiving, record keeping.

**Objectives of the study**

*The National Survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists*

The objectives of the National Survey of which this study forms a part is to produce a nationally representative database on how individual Indigenous artists in remote Australia establish, maintain and develop their professional arts practice. The policy areas for which the survey data are proving to be relevant include the following: avenues for expanding economic opportunities; education, training and skills development; infrastructure needs; the role of art centres and other third sector organisations; cultural tourism; and the future sustainability of Indigenous communities in remote and very remote locations.

*The survey in the Central Desert/APY Lands region*

In the implementation of the National Survey in the Central Desert/APY Lands region, the overall objectives remain as spelt out above. The survey investigates: the range of activities that artists undertake or have undertaken; the pathways for acquiring the knowledge and skills (the cultural capital) to become an artist in remote areas; respondents' current economic engagement with arts and cultural production; the spread of paid and unpaid work of different types, the allocation of time to different activities, and the nature and amounts of income earned; aspects of professional creative art practice in the region; and the role of cultural production in sustainable community development.

**Methodology**

For the purpose of this survey, the boundaries of the Central Desert and APY Lands study region are taken to coincide with the following Statistical Areas Level 2 (SA2) boundaries as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS): Tanami, Yuendumu – Anmatjere, Sandover – Plenty, Petermann – Simpson, Ross, Flynn, Charles, Mount Johns, East Side and Larapinta and APY Lands. To be eligible for participation in the survey, respondents were required to: self-identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or both; be 15 years old or above; be residing in remote and very remote areas of the Central Desert and APY Lands region (in accordance with the defined study boundaries); and have had previous experience in at least one of the five creative artistic activities considered in this study. We estimate that there are about 3,500 Indigenous adult practising artists in the study region. This estimate allowed us to calculate the minimum requirement for a sample size for this region as being

set at n=94. In the end, our fieldwork yielded a sample size of 132, comprising 55 interviews in the APY Lands and 77 in the Central Desert.

In identifying artists for interview, we relied on a limited sampling procedure involving locating artists via a variety of regional organisations including art centres, commercial and artists-run galleries, community centres, youth centres, men's sheds, women's centres, Indigenous rangers organisations, publishing houses, schools, aged care centres, TV and radio stations, broadcasting corporations, culture and learning centres, language centres, archives and libraries, arts and cultural festivals, media production centres, peak bodies and relevant government departments.

The research team undertook a scoping trip to the study region in July 2017, and the main fieldwork involving interviews with artists in the Central Desert and APY Lands took place between March and May 2018. The survey interviews were conducted in the following locations in the study region: Yuendumu, Papunya, Haasts Bluff, Areyonga, Hermannsburg, Tjuwanpa, Santa Teresa, Alice Springs, Yulara, Mutitjulu, Umuwa, Pukatja, Mimili, Fregon, Amata and Nyapari. The researchers received necessary research permissions to enter these communities and conduct the interviews, with full cooperation and engagement from the communities, local organisations and relevant peak bodies.

The survey was administered by computer-assisted face-to-face interviews in English or, when it was required, with the assistance of a translator/interpreter. Some weighting was needed in our data to adjust for differences between the sample and the target population. Subject to normal caveats concerning statistical inference, we can take our results to be broadly representative of the population of adult Indigenous artists in the Central Desert and APY Lands region.

**Socio-demographic characteristics of artists in the Central Desert/APY Lands region**

The age distribution of Indigenous artists in the region appears to follow a bimodal distribution, with a majority in the 35–55 age range but with a significant concentration of numbers in the post-65 age group. The artists in the latter group are predominantly older painters who have been working in a regular pattern for many years and continue to do so.

A number of respondents speak more than one Indigenous language as well as English. Overall, 93 percent of artists in remote areas in the region use their traditional language most these days, six percent said they mostly used English, and one percent said they used a language other than English or their traditional language.

Other socio-demographic characteristics of the sample include domestic arrangements and the incidence of disability. In regard to the former, one quarter of the artists are single with no children and a further quarter are single with children. About four in ten are living with a partner and children. Just over 40 percent of artists indicated that they lived with a disability or long-term illness but only 10 percent of these artists said that their disability had a negative effect on their work "all of the time" or "most of the time".

**Artists' cultural activities**

Within creative art practices, the most prominent art form in the Central Desert/APY Lands region is visual arts, with just over three-quarters of survey respondents currently working in this field. Among other cultural activities, the most prevalent are the traditional cultural practices of caring for country, fishing/hunting/collecting/preparing bush food, making Indigenous medicines/cosmetics, providing Indigenous health services, and participating in ceremonies, as well as the continuing process of passing on cultural knowledge to others.

On average, an artist in the Central Desert/APY Lands region has engaged in seven or eight cultural economic activities at some time in their life. At the present time, she or he is engaged in about two artistic activities and about four to five other cultural activities. This average artist receives some form of income for her/his work in at least one of the artistic activities and about two other cultural activities.

Only about three-quarters of respondents who have practised some artistic activity in the past are currently engaged in it. In particular, for example, fewer than half of those with experience in film-making or multimedia work are able to practise in this field. The data also indicate that about three in five artists with experience in cultural tourism are currently not engaged in this activity. In addition, there appears to be a large underutilised pool of artists with experience in cultural archiving, arts management and arts administration. In aggregate these data point to the availability of significant levels of cultural and human capital in the Central Desert/APY Lands region that might be capable of further deployment in art and cultural production.

**Acquisition of cultural capital**

In this survey, we distinguish between: (1) formal education, which includes the usual processes of schooling and other general education that provides a wide range of knowledge and competencies; (2) cultural education, imparting knowledge and skills required for participating in cultural activities and gaining permissions to practise cultural work within certain cultural laws; and (3) specific training required for practising in a particular artistic occupation.

*Formal education*

Among different art forms, visual artists appear to be less highly educated in formal education than other Indigenous artists in the study region – almost half of visual artists in the region did not attain higher than Year 9 in formal education. Performing artists, however, appear to be somewhat more highly educated than other artists. These results reflect in part the age distributions of the two artist populations – the preponderance of older individuals among visual artists means that that art form has relatively more people whose school education would have been at the time when the educational services and facilities were not easily available to their communities, or indeed non-existent.

*Cultural knowledge*

Learning culture from family members is both the most common way (92 percent) and the most important pathway (78 percent) for artists to acquire cultural knowledge. Outside of families, elders and other community members are a highly significant source, with about two thirds of artists identifying it as such and 15 percent believing it was the most important in their cultural education. A majority of respondents (almost 60 percent) identify learning from being on country as important and for five percent of respondents this represents the most important pathway.

*Art industry skills*

There are multiple ways by which Indigenous artists in remote communities can acquire skills necessary for their artistic occupations. Once again, it is learning from a family member that is both the most common and the most important source of knowledge, whether or not the learning includes participation as well as just observation. Other significant avenues include self-learning and learning on the job, workshops, school, and mentorship.

*Conclusion*

All of the pathways considered above can be seen as providing competencies that enable Indigenous people in the Central Desert/APY region to engage in economically productive activity, while maintaining the inalienable connection with their culture. At the same time, it is important to note that these pathways also provide competencies that are relevant to a wide variety of jobs in the cultural economy and in the wider labour market.

**Time allocation**

More than half of the artists in the region work in visual arts more or less full-time, i.e. roughly 4–5 days in an average week. For those artists engaged in performing arts, the pattern of time allocation is more widely distributed, with the average time at their artistic activity adding up to something less than one full day a week. Time spent on other creative work – film-making, composing, writing – tends to amount to about one full day per week or less for most producers.

There are only a few individuals in the region who derive something close to full-time work from any of the other cultural activities listed – for example, those with secure employment in administrative or managerial positions in art centres or other organisations, or the small number of artists who can work full-time in cultural tourism. The amount of time devoted to going out bush for purposes such as caring for country, fishing, hunting or collecting bush food varies with the location of the individual. Teaching others in arts and culture takes up to one full day a week for one-third of respondents.

Of those artists who work outside the arts at other activities not directly related to culture, about half (51 percent) do so for 4–5 days per week, i.e. more or less full-time. In the Central Desert/APY Lands region, artists work as aged/child/youth care workers, school teachers and coordinators, community service patrollers, municipal workers, employment consultants, administrators, livestock workers, gardeners, drivers, check-out workers at local shops, road workers, and so on.

**Financial circumstances**

*Paid and unpaid activities*

The great majority (95 percent) of visual artists who practised their art in the last 12 months received some financial return from it. However, only about 60 percent of musicians, actors and other performers were paid, and even fewer writers and film-makers. The numbers of composers making money from their work are particularly low (fewer than 40 percent). In the case of work at other cultural activities, some is done on a voluntary basis, whilst other activities may or may not be paid depending on circumstances. In regard to work that does not directly relate to culture, the great majority of artists in the region who undertake such work (just over three-quarters) are not paid for it. The voluntary nature of the majority of non-cultural work in remote areas of the region points to the overall lack of job opportunities in these areas. In these settings, it is apparent that arts and cultural activities perform better than non-cultural activities in providing regional artists with relevant employment opportunities and associated incomes.

*Sources of payment*

Occasionally artists may receive payment as individuals, such as when they sell a painting directly to a final buyer, but the great majority of payments for artistic activity are derived via organisations such as art centres. Nevertheless, the private sector also plays an important role, particularly for performing artists and composers, approximately 40 percent of whom receive payments from a private company or as individuals.

*Importance of income from cultural activities*

For those cultural producers engaged in visual arts and performing arts, only between about 30 and 40 percent of them regard the income from these activities as comprising a major income source for them. In the case of those engaged in writing/storytelling, none can make a significant return from this work.

*Methods of payment*

Works of visual artists are usually paid per piece (82 percent of all visual artists). Most sell their work through an art centre, which may pay an agreed price for the work on receipt, or (more commonly) will pay the artists when the work is sold. The majority of performing artists receive fees per services for their work. Artists in part-time or full-time employment enjoy some regularity in their income, for example those working in arts administration or management. For most other arts and cultural work, a variety of payment methods is being used in the region.

*Other sources of income*

Other paid or unpaid work outside the arts and cultural sector is undertaken by 30 percent of the artists in our sample; just under one-quarter of all artists who engage in non-cultural work are paid for this work. About one-third of those undertaking paid non-cultural activities are doing so on a full-time basis and another third on a part-time basis. Almost half of these non-cultural jobs are within the government sector and just under 40 percent are within the third sector.

About four in five artists receive some form of support from one or more non-work sources. The main source of non-work income is government benefits; just on 70 percent of all artists in the region receive some form of financial support through a government benefit program. A significant proportion of this group of recipients is comprised of pensioners and people with disability, and around ten percent of artists on government benefits receive a parenting payment. About five percent are on a Work-for-the-Dole program with CDP activities. Other non-work income sources include money received from family or partner and mining royalties (community trust).

*Supporting others*

Almost all artists support other people in one way or another; not surprisingly, the main beneficiaries of this income redistribution are members of the artist's close family including his or her children or grandchildren. These data reflect the demand sharing economy that typically characterises Indigenous communities in remote areas.

*The main source of income*

About half of all artists (48 percent) nominated "other sources" as their principal revenue stream; we can conclude that government benefits were the most significant item for the majority of these individuals, perhaps because of some degree of regularity of such payments. Creative artistic activities were the main income source for almost three in ten artists (27 percent) and a further eight percent gained their principal income from other cultural work.

*Mean and median incomes*

Our data on artists' incomes in the last 12 months indicate a mean income from creative activities of $10,700 (median $3,000). Mean incomes from other cultural activities and from other non-cultural activities were $2,800 and $5,100 respectively, giving a mean total income from work of $18,700 (median $10,500). Average income from other sources, as

described above, was $10,500 (median $12,500). Thus we find that the average artist's total income from all sources in the last 12 months was $29,100 (median $23,800).

These data show that creative activities produce just over one-third (35 percent) of a typical or average artist's total income, and more than half (56 percent) of their income from work. About 20 percent of total income comes from other work outside the cultural sector. We note that 38 percent of total income is derived from other sources, primarily government benefits.

It appears that artists in the Central Desert/APY Lands region may be better off than the rest of the Indigenous workforce in the region. Our estimate of the median annual income of artists in the region of around $23.8 thousand per annum is significantly higher than the median personal income for Indigenous adults in the region (about $11.7 thousand p.a.) derived from 2016 ABS Census data[2]. This median income of artists in the region is also higher than median personal income of Indigenous people in the labour force as a whole (about $18.2 thousands p.a.). Thus it can be seen that working in the arts and cultural sector can provide an important means toward economic improvement for Indigenous people in the region.

**Professional practice**

In considering issues of art practice, we distinguish between those artists who are primarily visual artists (activities including painting, print-making, weaving, carving, sculpting and so on) and those who are performing artists (engaged in music, dance, theatre, or film production).

*Artists' years of experience*

More than half of the artists in the region have had in excess of 20 years of experience practising their art. This attests to the significant accumulation of human capital in the Central Desert/APY Lands that comprises a major resource contributing to the generation of economic benefit for communities in the region.

*Locations and facilities for making work*

The data show that 92 percent of visual artists use an art centre at some time as a place to work, and for 84 percent of them this is their most important work location. Performing artists such as musicians or dancers, on the other hand, often have no alternative other than to produce their music or practise at home, and for almost four in ten (38 percent) this is the most important location. Alternatively, a community facility such as a school or a men's shed can provide the space and possibly equipment for performance practice. Some musicians in the region are fortunate enough to be able to utilise a dedicated space such as a recording studio – provided, for example, by a local community facility or an artist's home studio. During interviews, many visual and performing artists mentioned the importance of being on country as a source of inspiration for their work.

*Preferences over time allocation*

When asked whether they would like to spend more, less, or about the same amount of time at their art practice, exactly half of respondents said they are happy with the status quo, while just over four in ten (43 percent) would like to spend more time at art work. The main reasons why those artists who would like to allocate more of their time to their art do not do so relate back to their family responsibilities, or the need to spend time at work not connected to their art practice, which affects about a quarter (26 percent) of artists willing to

[2] Our data show that a majority of Indigenous practising artists in the region are not in the labour force.

do more. Moreover, 15 percent of artists nominated health issues as the main reason for not undertaking more artistic work, and a further ten percent identified difficulties in promoting their work or getting their work to market. An increased effort to expand market opportunities for art from remote areas is needed to address the latter problem.

*Professional achievements*

Almost two-thirds (64 percent) of artists in the Central Desert/APY Lands region have had their work shown or presented in capital cities, and nearly one in three (29 percent) have been seen overseas. One-third (32 percent) of artists in the region have won an award or prize of some sort. A smaller proportion of artists (ten percent) have received a grant or similar funding for their art work. Of those whose work has been showcased overseas or in capital cities, between 85 and 91 percent regarded this experience as having been positive. Likewise, 94 percent of those winning a prize or receiving a grant reported these successes as having a positive effect on their art practice.

*Use of equipment and technology*

More than three-quarters of visual artists (77 percent) do not use any technological device, whilst the great majority of performing artists (85 percent) use one or more devices. Note that overall Indigenous artists use technology more than the Indigenous population in general; Australia-wide, Indigenous artists in very remote and remote areas access the internet more often than the general Indigenous population in these areas – 73 percent compared to 64 percent for very remote areas, and 56 percent compared to 50 percent for remote areas (NATSISS 2014-15).

*Copyright issues*

The great majority (92 percent) of artists said that as far as they were aware, their work or a reproduction of their work had not been used without their permission or payment. Of the very small number whose copyright had been infringed at some time, most had taken successful action to stop infringement or to seek compensation. To their credit, most art centres, and most galleries dedicated to Indigenous art, take a responsible attitude and exercise due care in regard to copyright protection for their artists. But the fact that copyright infringement does not appear to be a serious problem for artists in the survey region should not be taken as a reason for letting up on efforts more generally to strengthen measures for protection of Indigenous intellectual property.

**Gender issues**

*Demographics*

A very large proportion of female Indigenous artists in remote and very remote areas of the Central Desert and APY Lands (40 percent) are single mothers or caring for dependent children without a support from a partner. Only two percent of males fall into this category. Women artists in the region are more than twice as likely than their male counterparts to suffer from disability (54 percent compared to 23 percent).

*Education and training*

Although both men and women mostly learn about their culture from family members, this pathway is much more significant among female than among male artists (85 percent compared to 60 percent); men by contrast are more likely than women to learn from friends or other community members, from being on country, and from participating in ceremonies. In a similar vein, acquiring artistic skills by learning from a family member is a more significant mode of learning for women than men (58 percent compared to 37 percent).

*Financial circumstances*

There are only minor differences between the genders in the levels of work income, such that the mean total incomes from work are not significantly different. However, women's income from other non-work sources is about twice that of their male counterparts. As a result, on average the total incomes from all sources for female artists in the region are somewhat greater than for male artists. We conclude that the financial disadvantage that is so pervasive for women in mainstream Australia does not appear to extend to artists in this region.

**State/Territory differences**

*Demographics*

The female/male gender ratio among artists is approximately 70/30 in the SA component of the survey region, and approximately 60/40 in the NT component. There are no significant differences in the mean ages of artists in the two areas.

*Cultural activities undertaken*

There is a stronger presence in music composition, film-making and multimedia work in the NT component of the region, and a greater involvement in ceremonies amongst Central Desert artists, and also a greater involvement across the board in the NT in artists' engagement with other cultural activities. Overall, differences between the two State/Territory jurisdictions in our data point to a somewhat more diversified art economy in the Central Desert than currently exists in the APY Lands. In particular, since the region in NT takes in both Alice Springs and the town of Yulara, there are more galleries, art centres, media organisations and other supporting facilities in the NT component of the survey region, and the culture-related tourism industry is far more extensive.

*Education and training*

The pathways that artists in the NT and SA identify as having been the most important in the process of their acquiring their cultural capital appear on the whole to be rather similar. In explanation, it can be argued that the basic means by which cultural knowledge and artistic skills are learned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote regions are essentially the same for all, regardless of location.

*Financial circumstances*

There is not a great deal of difference between the two regions revealed in the income data. Nevertheless, the financial importance and level of returns from other cultural activities do show some differences. These activities provide the main source of income for a larger proportion of artists in the NT than in SA (ten percent compared with six percent). On the other hand, income from non-cultural activities is the most important source for a larger proportion of SA than NT artists (16 versus 12 percent).

**Art and culture in sustainable communities**

We found that a significant majority of artists (84 percent) agree with the proposition that art and cultural production has the potential to promote the long-term sustainability of remote communities in the Central Desert/APY Lands region. In addition, there was almost unanimous agreement that "Artists/writers like myself can train young people in the community to become artists/writers". Respondents also endorsed the importance of bilingual education in school (94 percent of respondents). In a post-school context, the value of arts-practice workshops was supported by 88 percent of respondents.

The results show that there was strong support for the importance of art centres, with 86 percent of respondents agreeing that "Having an art centre creates (could create) jobs and

incomes in my community". There would appear to be scope for further infrastructure development in some remote communities, with almost 60 percent of respondents agreeing with the proposition that facilities such as community centres, venues, etc. in their community at present were not enough to support more artistic activity.

Most respondents in our survey (86 percent) expressed a positive attitude to having tourists visit in order to experience Aboriginal culture at first hand. Furthermore, three-quarters of respondents (75 percent) thought that tourists can bring incomes and employment to communities; however, there remains a significant minority (25 percent) who hold neutral or negative views on this proposition. The latter result reflects the ambivalence felt towards high-volume mass tourism which, although potentially lucrative, may be culturally insensitive or even damaging.

**Conclusions: Policy issues and recommendations**

**(1) Infrastructure needs**

*Art centres*

Artists are unequivocal in their recognition of the vital role that art centres play in the functioning of the Indigenous arts economy in the region. Nevertheless, while the art centre model has been working, it will need to rely on a continuation of support in future. In particular, art centres provide many additional social services and other public benefits to the wider community for which they rarely receive any funding support. It is important that funding arrangements for art centres recognise this reality for their ongoing sustainability.

*Resources for performing artists*

Generally performing artists do not have access to widely available facilities to assist in the development of their creative work. Many also face problems with finding opportunities to present their work due to a lack of appropriate venues or events. Some cultural or community facilities can foster musical work by creative individuals, and there is ample scope for extending these sorts of facilities to more communities with adequate funding support. They are the sorts of infrastructure facilities that can make a difference, especially for young people who have the potential to develop their creative skills and perhaps embark on a creative career.

*Support organisations*

Several cultural organisations exist in the Central Desert/APY Lands region that support the work of artists, including Desart, Ku Arts and the APY Art Centre Collective. There are also a number of organisations that support the performing arts, composing and filmmaking including IRCA, CAAMA, PY Media, PAW Media, Music NT and others. The important role of all these organisations in facilitating the development of arts and cultural practice in the region needs full acknowledgement in the formulation of policy strategies at all levels of public and private sector engagement affecting arts and cultural producers.

**(2) Expanding economic opportunities**

*Earning income from culture-related activities*

In addition to the creative arts there are a number of other culture-related activities which can also generate an income, for example in the fields of translation and interpreting, cultural archiving, cross-cultural consulting, and providing cultural tourism services to visitors. However, there are many artists who do not earn income from these activities, despite having the skills and experience to perform such work. With the right support there

could be significantly more economic opportunities derived from these sorts of activities, contributing in turn to developing a stronger arts and cultural sector in the region.

*Small business development*

Some artists may take up opportunities to establish small creative enterprises, perhaps on a collaborative or cooperative basis, and perhaps engaged in experimental art or developing new modes of distribution. In policy terms, such initiatives can link into a broader innovation agenda associated with the development of cultural and creative industries. Smart policy measures that recognise talent in this field can provide seed funding or small business incubators to encourage creative enterprise development.

*Market and supply-chain issues*

An important avenue towards expanding economic opportunities for individual cultural producers in the region lies in developing the distribution and marketing components of the value chain. To a large extent market development takes place in response to commercial incentives, but there is a role for judicious policy intervention, for example through provision of market intelligence, export promotion programs, and in regulatory measures such as those required to prevent the sale of fake Indigenous art products and to promote best practice in the certification of authenticity by all sellers of products purporting to come from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

*Learning from successes of hybrid organisations*

Remote Indigenous communities provide cross-cultural environments. Working in these environments requires bridging different values, rationales, agendas and objectives. Enterprises and organisations that have understood and been able to accommodate this, such as ranger organisations and art centres, have been able to function and thrive in these conditions. Their structures allow them to operate within the hybrid realm of the market, embracing government, community/families and the not-for-profit sectors. There is an opportunity to acknowledge such working models and learn from their experiences.

**(3) Education, training and skill development**

*School*

School education is recognised by artists as having some part to play in imparting cultural knowledge and skills that can be complementary to the essential role of family and community members. Some programs provide for opportunities for such cultural learning within the school environment, for example through cooperation between an art centre and the local school, whereby children visit the centre on a regular basis, or where senior artists visit the school to teach kids arts and cultural skills. There is an opportunity to strengthen these educational pathways by acknowledging their long-term nature and providing appropriate funding support.

*Inter- and intra-generational cultural transmission*

At present the costs of family- and community-based art and cultural teaching are to a large extent borne by the community and via in-kind payments. Very few funding streams acknowledge the artists involved as teachers and therefore fund their work accordingly. Other educational initiatives that involve family and community members include training provided by arts centres, ranger organisations, culture and language centres and other organisations. But these organisations rarely have an appropriate budget or funding to support teaching activities, so the workers are likely to go unpaid. The Report points to the need to acknowledge the long-term educational benefit that these organisations can provide, and to ensure that they and their staff are properly supported for providing educational services.

*Skill transfers from outside*

One of the features of organisations working to support art and cultural producers in remote Indigenous communities is the mixing of skills, experiences and knowledge of local Indigenous staff with those of non-Indigenous professionals coming from outside the communities. These incoming experts in turn benefit from training and advice received from senior artists and local Indigenous staff. When these people leave, many years of valuable experience also goes. If there were a database of these culturally-experienced professionals, they could also be engaged as consultants later on in the arts and cultural sector or perhaps in other industries.

*Access to country*

Virtually all artists spend some part of their time caring for country, and many rely on accessing their country as a source of knowledge and creative inspiration, or for gathering materials for their art production. The data provide compelling evidence in support of the need for securing artists' access to country, if art and culture are to become a stronger source of economic empowerment for remote Aboriginal communities in the Central Desert/APY Lands region.

*Further education*

Various opportunities exist for further education of artists in the region, such as: short courses and workshops provided through a local organisations or agencies; the hosting of a visiting artist or educator to train local practitioners in particular techniques such as printmaking, fabric design, and so on; and specialised courses for film- and multi-media makers. There is a need for continued funding for such initiatives, including support for workshops and short courses taught by Indigenous senior artists and cultural producers from the region.

*Business skills*

There is a strong need for business training in remote communities that could help Indigenous artists, cultural producers and other community members to understand the business side of art and cultural production. Many art centres have taken on a role of educating their artists in the business aspects of the arts, and more could be done if dedicated funding and support materials could be provided for local organisations that could take on this function.

**(4) Cultural tourism**

*Uluru*

For some visitors to Uluru, engagement with Anangu culture remains superficial or non-existent. For those tourists seeking a more authentic contact with the local culture, the Yulara Cultural Centre provides outlets for sale of artworks by artists from the region, and cultural workshops and tours with Indigenous or non-Indigenous guides. However, there are complaints that the main resort at Yulara sells artworks, souvenirs and other artefacts that are not authentically derived from Anangu culture. A primary policy concern relates to the impact of the tourist industry on the Anangu population. There is a need for effective regulatory and other policy measures to control the development of the industry in this region so as to safeguard the local culture, to protect its cultural values, and to ensure that an appropriate measure of the revenues and employment generated by the industry accrue to the benefit of the local Indigenous population.

*Central Desert*

Although there has been a great deal of tourism development in Central Australia, there is scope for much more in the niche/cultural tourism space. In some locations, opportunities exist for the establishment of small family-based tourism enterprises involving Aboriginal individuals and focussing on providing small-group art/culture/nature experiences for discriminating visitors. Managing the business aspects of these prospective enterprises requires skill development programs such as workshops, short-course training sessions, and/or small business incubators tailored to the needs of family-based tourism initiatives. Another effective way would be to build on the existing knowledge and experience of those successful Indigenous tourism enterprises operating in the region.

*APY Lands*

Tourism in the APY Lands of South Australia is virtually non-existent, yet the potential is there for development of cultural tourism in the region, particularly since the main road running west from the Stuart Highway is undergoing a major upgrade, at least as far as Pukatja. It is apparent that, whilst tourism development in the APY Lands could be expected to bring a range of economic benefits to the art economy and to individual artists, a prerequisite will be the establishment of infrastructure to cater to tourists' needs. There are strong grounds for focussing any tourism development strategy for the Lands on small-scale cultural tourism involving discriminating and culturally-sensitive visitors. It goes without saying that any policy strategies in this area must be initiated by and with the agreement of the traditional owners and the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Executive and members.

### (5) Concluding remarks

There is considerable variation across the region in existing economic, social and cultural circumstances and in different communities' potential for future development. It is impossible to generalise in recommending policy action. Moreover, it is unlikely that a single policy measure can be found that will address all the issues at once; rather a mix of complementary measures will be needed to address particular aspects. It is important also to bear in mind that we are not suggesting that art and cultural production can on its own transform any remote community; rather, we argue that in the right conditions it can be an effective avenue towards employment creation and income generation, helping to improve the long-term prospects for economic sustainability and social viability, and doing so in a way that respects the fundamental importance of Indigenous culture. All the policy recommendations that flow from this study are pointed in this direction.

# National Survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists

## *Integrating Art Production and Economic Development in the Central Desert (NT) and the APY Lands (SA)*

## 1. BACKGROUND

Arts and cultural production has significant potential to contribute to the economic sustainability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in remote areas of Australia. Indigenous Australians possess fundamental cultural knowledge and skills, and participate in a wide range of arts and cultural activities. These are the activities that allow Indigenous cultures to be maintained, developed and expressed, ensuring their continuation. They also encourage a strong sense of community identity. Yet little is known as to how the cultural assets in Indigenous communities can be mobilised as a source of income generation and employment creation. The only official survey that collects data on aspects of cultural production in Indigenous communities in remote Australia is the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) carried out periodically by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). However, the data collected by NATSISS only target some selected cultural activities, and the statistics generated are not suitable for determining the full scale of artistic and cultural production in these areas.

In the mainstream arts in Australia it has been recognised that the only way to collect reliable, robust, systematic and objective data about the conditions of individual artistic production is via a nationwide survey. Such a survey was undertaken for the first time in 1983 as a component of the Australia Council's Individual Artist Inquiry, and has been repeated periodically ever since, with the most recent survey having been carried out in 2017[3]. The information about arts practice yielded by the surveys has been of inestimable value to government departments and agencies at Federal, State, Territory and local levels, peak bodies in all areas of the arts, cultural institutions, other arts-related organisations and the general public. While these surveys have included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists working at a professional level in the mainstream – mostly in metropolitan and other urban and regional locations – it has never been possible to extend the coverage to include remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. A completely different questionnaire and survey methodology is required to address the realities of artistic production of these artists.

The nationwide survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, of which the present study is a part, was initiated by the present authors in 2015 to remedy this situation. The Survey responds to a need for a deeper and more informed understanding of the circumstances of Indigenous cultural production as a source of income and employment in remote communities. It is motivated by two basic propositions: (1) Use of cultural assets has the potential to make a significantly more substantial contribution to the economic sustainability of Indigenous communities in remote Australia than it does at present, and it can do so in a way that links economic and business development with the maintenance of

[3] See David Throsby and Katya Petetskaya, *Making Art Work: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia* (Sydney: Australia Council for the Arts, 2017), referred to henceforward as *Making Art Work 2017*.

Indigenous culture; and (2) If the stakeholders are to understand the potential of cultural assets as a component of economic sustainability, and if policy-makers are to understand how to design policy strategies to support this, basic data are needed about cultural work and practice on the ground.

The purpose of the study in the Central Desert of the Northern Territory and the APY Lands of South Australia is to investigate and analyse the extent to which art and cultural production can provide a viable pathway towards economic empowerment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in remote towns, settlements, homelands and outstations across the region. These are areas where cultural production has the potential to be one of the most important means for providing a viable, sustainable and culturally-relevant livelihood for members of the community. Cultural production is taken to include creative activities such as the visual and performing arts, writing/ storytelling, composing, artistic production in film and audio-visual media, as well as a range of other cultural activities such as caring for country, participating in ceremonies, cultural governance, cultural archiving, and so on. Notwithstanding the wide range of cultural activities covered, the primary focus of this study is on the creative arts, and on the prospects for art and cultural production to promote employment for creative workers and incomes for communities.

Implementation of the survey in the Central Desert/APY Lands region is particularly important because of the following considerations:

- Firstly, economic sustainability for Indigenous Australians living in remote communities is an extremely important issue in both South Australia and the Northern Territory and there is a strong need for a clearer understanding of the ways in which production of arts and cultural goods and services might be able to contribute to the long-term resilience of these communities.

- Secondly, there are a number of established art centres and other cultural organisations in the region, which constitute an important component of the infrastructure supporting regional art and cultural production; the maintenance and further development of this infrastructure is essential to the viability of art and cultural activities for Indigenous people in remote and very remote areas.

- Thirdly, the policy directions of the Commonwealth, SA and NT Governments have an extensive engagement with the issues that this project addresses, such that the results have the potential to make a significant contribution to policy formation at all levels of public administration as well as in commercial and non-government sectors.

## 2. ART AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

As described in Section 1 of this Report, the aim of this study is to investigate and analyse the extent to which art and cultural production can provide a means towards economic empowerment for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The context, within which the study is placed, is one that recognises the fundamental significance of culture to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The intangible cultural capital possessed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in these remote communities is the fundamental resource upon which they can draw – both generally in their day-to-day lives, and specifically in their creative and culture-related activities. It is through the use of their cultural and natural resources that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have their strongest opportunity to attain long-term economic and cultural sustainability.

*Analytical framework*

For the purposes of systematic analysis, we require a model encapsulating the essential character of the Indigenous art and cultural economy in remote regions. Such a model will look somewhat different from standard economic models of industrial organisation, labour supply, profit-oriented production, entrepreneurial behaviour, and so on. An overarching framework for our model can be drawn from the concept of sustainability as understood by First Nations communities all around the world. For these peoples, the basic premises governing economic, social and cultural life relate to the interconnected roles of land, cultural law and language. The social norms and mode of governance for Indigenous communities in Australia exemplify these principles, which have underpinned the maintenance and transmission of their culture for thousands of years.

Our focus in this study is on the individual artist or cultural producer who lives and works within this Indigenous art and cultural economy. The model of the economy that we propose extends the conventional three-sector model (comprising a government sector, a commercial sector, and a non-profit "third" sector) by overlaying a fourth sector, a community/family sector, that has interactions with all three. Organisations operating within this economy can be seen as examples of "hybrid" organisations, which combine elements from at least two of the state, market, non-profit and community sectors.[4] The boundaries between the sectors are blurred, and overlaps between the sectors can shift with time and changes of circumstances, and will be specific to each particular hybrid organisation. The concept of hybridity in organisations emerged in the mid-1990s and has gradually gained in importance in what is now known as a "hybrid movement" (Battilana et al. 2012).

There are multiple definitions of hybridity. In the context of remote Indigenous communities, hybrids occur as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned corporations, social enterprises, community-run initiatives and commercial businesses that involve corporate social responsibility and corporate philanthropy. For our purposes, we can take an art centre in a remote Indigenous community as an example of a hybrid organisation. Art centres are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned, managed and governed enterprises that are often partially supported by the state, yet they also function as businesses that need to generate operating profits. In many communities, art centres have little choice but to take on additional duties as social welfare distributors in the absence of such organisations in the community in which they operate. Such additional services include but are not limited to: account management for their artists; negotiating with Government services on behalf of the

[4] Use of the terms "hybrid" here is different from its application in Jon Altman's concept of the "hybrid economy" comprising state, market and customary sectors (see Altman, 2007).

artists (and at times their family members); health and aged care support to the artists; providing training and education to community members; documenting and archiving of material of cultural and social significance to the community; and so on. At times, an art centre might be the only organisation in a community that has functional equipment and facilities, such as an internet or phone connection, printer, or transportation resources. A remote art centre often also serves as an effective conduit for other organisations and agencies which use arts-funded infrastructure to deliver their outcomes; in this respect these other organisations take advantage of the art centre's role as a broker between artists and outside stakeholders.

Ranger groups provide another example of hybrid organisations in remote Indigenous communities. These groups usually receive support from various Government programs for providing environmental services to the Australian community, yet some of their activities are market-based – plant harvesting enterprises, for example, or making bush medicine/cosmetics for retail or wholesale sale via local markets, stores and online. These organisations may also participate in the market via trading in Australian Carbon Credit Units.[5] Notwithstanding these commercial operations, ranger programs are an extension of existing practices of caring for country that have been undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on a continuous basis over many years in many parts of Australia.

Given the context of hybrid organisations as outlined above, the analytical framework that we propose involves the individual cultural producer placed at the centre of the system, engaging in cultural production and cultural transmission as an individual operating within all four sectors. The individual cultural producer is portrayed as a member of a community with cultural, social and other responsibilities, and functioning in an environment that is affected by values, agendas and rationalities (often competing with each other) that derive from all four sectors.

It is important to note that the hybridity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations operating remotely allows for overlapping and sharing of services between organisations. This happens in a variety of ways, including: when tourist operations cooperate and rely on services provided by art centres or rangers; when art centres rely on the stream of tourists being brought in by those tourist operators; when artists cooperate with rangers for collecting materials on country; when organisations or groups in a community rely on the services of a local multimedia centre for documentation of events and promotional material; when dancers and musicians benefit from using vacant spaces provided by a local school for rehearsals; or when artists are able to earn some income from participating in culture programs run by a school. Because there are strong interconnections between the sectors, boosting one or more of the sectors in remote Indigenous communities has the potential to contribute to the growth of the local economy overall.

*Employment and unemployment*

An essential concern of this study is with the prospects for employment creation through art and cultural production in remote Indigenous communities in the Central Desert/APY Lands region. As is well known, employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals living in remote areas of Australia, especially the younger generation, tend to be sparse, a fact that increases the pressure on young people to leave the community in search of employment in larger centres. Jobs in remote areas have particular challenges such as constraints on accessibility, resources, services, infrastructure and communication, as well as limited access to professional development, training and education. In addition, in

[5] Received for reducing carbon emissions via burning at the start of the dry season, which allows avoiding much bigger fires later on.

many remote areas in Australia, seasonality and having to work in a physical environment of climatic extremes add to the list of challenges. Moreover, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals experience difficulties when trying to balance their cultural and work obligations. The impact of this issue on the workplace is well known, such as when ceremonies interrupt work for several days or weeks. There is a strong need for culturally appropriate jobs in remote areas or at least jobs flexible enough to accommodate cultural requirements and obligations.

Efforts have been made by successive governments to deal with the lack of jobs and job training in remote areas. The Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program was introduced to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the 1970s as a community development, employment creation and income support scheme. The CDEP was terminated in 2009. At the moment, the Community Development Program (CDP) is the main program of job-related assistance for unemployed people in remote areas[6]. In 2017 there were about 35 thousand CDP participants, of whom around 84 percent were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals. The CDP provides social security for the job seeker, with obligations to meet certain requirements, such as undertaking 25 hours per week in work-for-the-dole, or up to their assessed capacity. Penalties can be applied for non-attendance.

The CDP and equivalent programs represent one approach to tackling employment problems in remote Indigenous communities, an approach involving identification of skill shortages and training provision for potential jobs. An alternative is to recognise that significant skills and even employment options already exist in the region, which can be utilised in creating incomes and more employment for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in remote areas. Such an approach would seek to expand existing opportunities proven to be working, rather than creating new ones from scratch. For this approach to work, there is an urgent need to understand the scope of existing skills and experiences that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in remote regions have. The National Survey of Remote Indigenous Artists was created with this purpose in mind.

*Remoteness issues*

There is a belief that the majority of jobs available remotely tend to concentrate in larger communities and hub settlements. To the extent that this has occurred, there is evidence that it has created social, cultural and economic problems (see, for example, Morphy 2008), yet has not contributed to improving the situation of remote Indigenous unemployment. Today 44 percent of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander people from remote and very remote areas Australia-wide live outside such hub settlements and in small homelands/outstations. Another 40 percent visit homelands/outstations from time to time –places where they fish, hunt, collect bush medicines, collect materials for their art works and make art, places of ceremonies. Only four percent have never visited a homeland, or are not allowed to, or do not know if they are allowed to visit (NATSISS 2014-15). For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples there are many economic, health, social and cultural benefits that living in smaller outstations/homelands can provide (Altman and Taylor 1989, McDermott et.al. 1998 Rowley et al. 2008). When living on their country, "people feel that they have a degree of autonomy, of control over their own destiny" (Morphy 2008, p.388).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals who are engaged in artistic activities have high levels of engagement in homelands/outstations. It is more common for Indigenous

[6] The Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP) was also in existence between 1 July 2013 and 1 July 2015.

artists than non-artists to live in such places. Nevertheless, living remotely does not mean a lack of engagement with the outside world. Artists who work from these locations also travel or send their work Australia-wide and internationally. Cultural tourism brings people from all over the world to places where Indigenous culture can be experienced in the most direct and authentic way. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals from these remote locations also participate in research, such as research into biodiversity undertaken in collaboration with different institutions in Australia and overseas – there are a number of examples of harvesting and cultivation of bush foods and medicine as commercial ventures[7]. Our analytical framework recognises the realities of living and working remotely for Indigenous cultural producers.

*Mapping remote Indigenous cultural production*

The broad conceptual framework within which this study is situated as outlined above involves also a delineation of the nature and extent of Indigenous cultural production in remote and very remote locations. In the present survey, mapping of cultural-economic activities that contribute to art and cultural production in the Central Desert/APY Lands region was undertaken by the research team in July 2017, based on the results of a similar mapping exercise of cultural-economic activities carried out by the present authors in the Kimberley region in 2015 and the East Arnhem Land region in 2012-2014.

The continuous mapping exercise allowed identification of the major cultural-economic activities being practised in remote areas, broadly classified into the following categories (1) creative artistic activities and (2) cultural maintenance and applied cultural activities, referred to simply as "other cultural activities". The activities identified (and corresponding occupations for the creative activities) are defined as follows:

Creative artistic activities:

- Visual arts (painting, photography, printmaking, making sculptures, textiles, carvings, weaving, ceramics, glass, jewellery)
- Performing arts (acting, dancing, playing musical instruments, singing)
- Composing or choreographing
- Writing or storytelling
- Making a film, TV or radio program, or multimedia work

Cultural maintenance and applied cultural activities:

- Teaching others in arts and cultural activities
- Caring for country
- Being on a cultural board, committee or council
- Interpreting, translating or cross-cultural consulting
- Making Indigenous medicines or cosmetics or providing Indigenous health services
- Fishing, hunting, collecting or preparing bush food
- Participating in ceremonies
- Providing cultural tourism services
- Arts administration
- Arts management
- Cultural archiving, record keeping

[7] See, for example, Altman et al. (1997); English and Baker (2003); Merne Altyerre-ipenhe (Food from the Creation time) Reference Group et al. (2011); Walsh et al. (2014).

All cultural-economic activities listed above can be interpreted with reference to standard industrial definitions as determined under the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) 2006 (Revision 2.0), as shown in Appendix 1.

In regard to definitional issues in interpreting the above list of activities, the following points should be noted:

- "Performing arts" is distinguished from "Participating in ceremonies". During survey interviews, respondents were asked if dance or music pieces that they were engaged in were performed to outsiders as part of showcasing local culture. In the case of a positive response the activity was defined as "performing arts".
- "Fishing, hunting, collecting bush food" and "Making Indigenous medicines or cosmetics or providing Indigenous health services" involve participation in activities that require detailed knowledge of the local environment – its seasons, ecology, flora, sand fauna" (Morphy 2008).
- "Caring for country" involves controlled burning, weed and feral species control, protecting marine life, the clearing of beaches, conservation and research of marine and terrestrial wildlife, in other words, land and sea management using Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander ecological knowledge.

# 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

## 3.1 THE NATIONAL SURVEY OF REMOTE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ARTISTS

The objectives of the National Survey of which this study forms a part is to produce a nationally representative database on how individual Indigenous artists in remote Australia establish, maintain and develop their professional arts practice. This database aims to provide reliable data on how cultural knowledge and creative skills are accumulated and transmitted within and between generations in different remote regions and how individual Indigenous artists utilise their knowledge and skills to serve both cultural and economic purposes, while pursuing their artistic aspirations. The database is intended to cover all major remote regions of Indigenous art production in Australia and will be able to be updated over time to add further information and account for changing conditions.

The results of this work so far are already providing a solid evidence base helping to inform policy-making by a range of stakeholders including individual artists, community organisations, art and cultural businesses, art centres, peak bodies and government agencies. The policy areas for which the survey data are proving to be relevant include the following:

- avenues for expanding economic opportunities through mobilisation of the existing cultural capital in remote Indigenous communities;
- education, training and skills development;
- infrastructure needs;
- the role of art centres and other third sector organisations;
- cultural tourism;
- the future sustainability of Indigenous communities in remote and very remote locations.

It is expected that the policy usefulness of the results of the National Survey will build up from local to regional to State/Territory and to national levels over time as the database is further developed.

## 3.2 THE SURVEY IN THE CENTRAL DESERT/APY LANDS REGION

In the implementation of the National Survey in the Central Desert/APY Lands region, the overall objectives remain as spelt out above. Since a basic premise of the survey is that art production must be seen in the context of the full extent of artists' cultural engagement, the Survey in the Central Desert/APY Lands region investigates a range of aspects of art and cultural production including:

- the number and extent of cultural-economic activities that artists undertake or have undertaken;
- the pathways for acquiring the knowledge and skills (the cultural capital) to become an artist in remote areas;
- respondents' current economic engagement with arts and cultural production;
- the spread of paid and unpaid work of different types, the allocation of time to different activities, and the nature and amounts of income earned;
- aspects of professional creative art practice in the region; and
- the role of cultural production in sustainable community development.

This Report is structured as follows: In the next section (Section 4) the methodology used in the study is described. Then Sections 5–13 discuss the detailed survey findings. Section 14 concludes the Report by drawing together the significant results of the study in an in-depth consideration of policy issues.

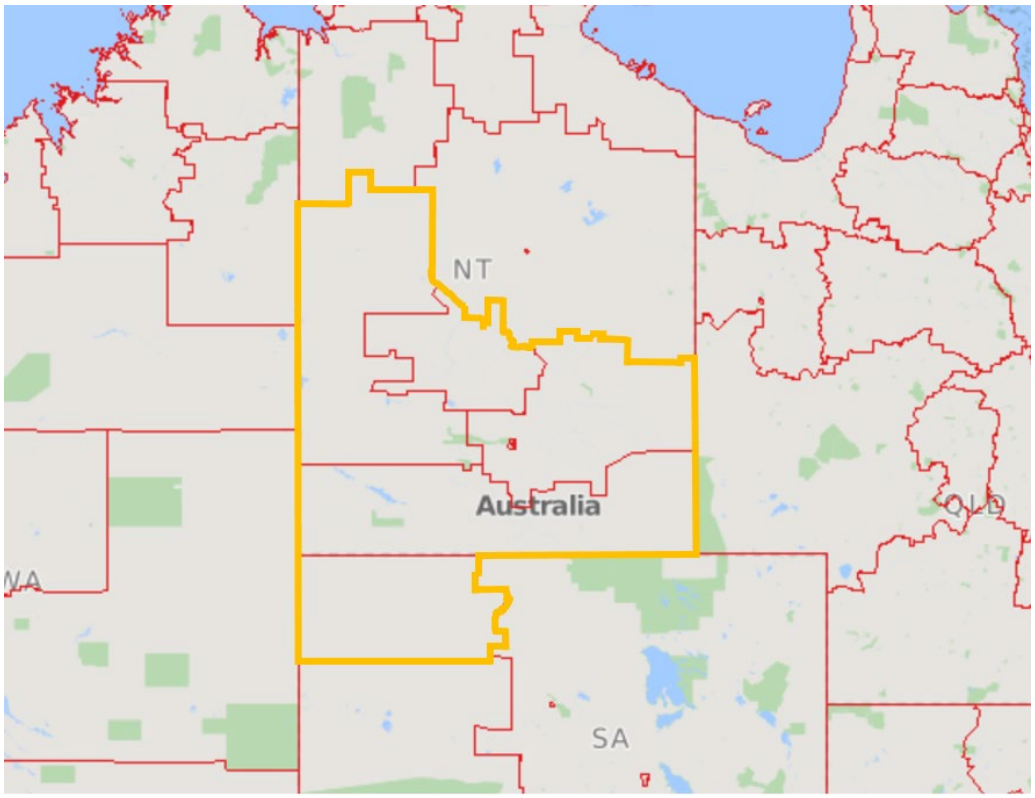
# 4. METHODOLOGY

This section describes how the survey in the Central Desert/APY Lands region was carried out. First, it is necessary to define the region. We then discuss how we estimated the target population and the required sample size, followed by a description of the survey procedure, and the calculation of weights to be applied to the data to assist in standardising results in line with known population characteristics.

## 4.1 REGIONAL BOUNDARIES

For the purpose of this survey, the boundaries of the Central Desert and APY Lands study region are taken to coincide with the following Statistical Areas Level 2 (SA2)[8] boundaries as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS): Tanami, Yuendumu – Anmatjere, Sandover – Plenty, Petermann – Simpson, Ross, Flynn, Charles, Mount Johns, East Side and Larapinta and APY Lands. Figure 4.1 shows the study region boundaries (solid yellow line). All of the locations are classified as "remote" or "very remote" in accordance with the 2016 ASGS Remoteness Structure.

**Figure 4.1 Central Desert and APY Lands regional boundaries**




[8] The SA2s are a general-purpose medium-sized area built from whole SA1s. Their aim is to represent a community that interacts together socially and economically.

### 4.2 TARGET POPULATION

The target population for this study are adult Indigenous artists residing in the Central Desert and APY Lands region in remote and very remote areas.[9] The region is home to diverse Aboriginal languages and cultures that include the Alyawarre, Anmatyerre, Central Arrernte, Eastern Arrernte, Jingili, Kaititj, Kaytetye, Kutkatja, Luritja, Mudbarra, Ngaanyatjarra, Ngaatjatjarra, Pertame, Pintubi, Pitjantjatjara, Southern Arrernte, Wambaya, Warlpiri, Warnmanpa, Warrumungu, Western Arrernte, Wuriaki and Yankunytjatjara peoples.

To be eligible for participation in the survey, respondents had to meet all four of the following criteria. Screening questions were introduced in the survey to ensure these criteria were satisfied. Respondents were required to:

(1) self-identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or both;
(2) be 15 years old or above;
(3) be residing in remote and very remote areas of the Central Desert and APY Lands region (in accordance with the defined study boundaries); and
(4) have had previous experience in at least one of the five creative artistic activities considered in this study (see further in Section 6).

### 4.3 ESTIMATION OF THE SAMPLE SIZE

The numbers of Indigenous artists residing in remote areas of Australia and practising across different art forms are largely unknown. For the purpose of this study, we had to rely on the only source available on which we could make our own estimates – the ABS series of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Surveys (NATSISS). The 2014–15 NATSISS provides data about percentages of Indigenous adults (15+) in remote and very remote areas who had participated in at least one of the following three artistic activities in 2014–15:

- making Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander arts or crafts;
- performing any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander music, dance, theatre, and/or;
- writing or telling Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander stories.

The definition of an artist used in this survey covers a wider range of creative artistic activities than those listed above as it also includes composers, choreographers, filmmakers and multimedia artists. Thus, the NATSISS estimates of the artists population are likely to underestimate the numbers of artists of relevance to this survey. In the absence of other sources however, the NATSISS data were used.

Furthermore, our definition of artists focuses on those *with experience* in particular art forms and not only those who have practised their art forms in the previous year, which is the focus of the NATSIS surveys. To make a comparison between our data and the NATSISS results, we use the data from our survey on artists who had participated in at least one of the five creative artistic activities in "the last 12 months".

Analysis of the 2014-15 NATSISS data shows that 25.0 percent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults (15+) in remote areas of the Northern Territory and 40.2 percent in very remote areas had participated in at least one of the three creative artistic activities in 2014-15. In South Australia, the entire APY Lands region is classified as "very remote"; here the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults participating in these activities

[9] Note that throughout this Report the word "remote" is used to refer to "remote and very remote" unless otherwise indicated.

was 38.9 in very remote areas in 2014–15. We therefore assume that these percentages can be applied to the adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the region as indicated by the 2016 Australian Census in order to estimate a lower bound on the number of artists located in the region, as shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Population distribution and size**

| ABS 2016 Statistical Area Level 2 | Communities | Remoteness[10] | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults (15+) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Population* | Participated in selected artistic activities in 2014–15** | |
| | | | N | % | N |
| Tanami | Papunya, Haasts Bluff, Hermannsburg, Areyonga, Lajamanu | Very remote | 1,745 | 40.2 | 701 |
| Yuendumu– Anmatjere | Yuendumu | Very remote | 1,267 | 40.2 | 509 |
| Sandover–Plenty | Santa Teresa, Titjikala | Remote | 2,554 | 25.0 | 639 |
| Petermann–Simpson | Yulara, Mutitjulu | Very remote | 862 | 40.2 | 347 |
| Ross, Flynn, Charles, Mount Johns, East Side & Larapinta | Alice Springs | Remote | 3,071 | 25.0 | 768 |
| APY Lands | Umuwa, Pukatja, Mimili, Fregon, Amata, Nyapari | Very remote | 1,397 | 38.9 | 543 |
| **Total Central Desert and APY Lands** | | | **10,896** | **-** | **3,507** |

* Source: ABS 2016 Census.

** Source: NATSISS 2014–15.

The calculations in Table 4.1 produce an estimate of about 3,500 adult practising artists in the study region. Although these figures are likely to understate the true number for the reasons stated earlier, we use them for the purposes of estimating approximate sample sizes. They allowed us to calculate the minimum requirement for a sample size for this region as being set at n=94, for a 10 percent margin of error at a 95 percent level of confidence. In the end, our fieldwork yielded a sample size of 132, comprising 55 interviews in the APY Lands and 77 in the Central Desert. Note that margins of error are different for the data specific to the APY Lands and the Central Desert – 11 percent when analysing the APY Lands data and 13 percent when analysing the Central Desert data (with a 95 percent level of confidence), given the sample sizes achieved for these areas.

### 4.4 SURVEY PROCEDURE

In the absence of a complete list of adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists residing in the study region we could not construct a sample frame for this study.[11] Instead we relied on a limited sampling procedure involving locating artists via a variety of regional

[10] As per the ABS 2016 Remoteness Structure.

[11] For a more detailed discussion of sampling issues in surveying remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, see David Throsby and Ekaterina Petetskaya (2015) *Remote Indigenous Cultural Practitioners in East Arnhem Land: Survey Methodology and Principal Results*. Macquarie Economics Research Paper 1/2011, September 2015, pp. 8–9.

organisations in commercial, government, not-for-profit and community sectors dealing with art and cultural activities. These organisations included art centres, commercial and artists-run galleries, community centres, youth centres, men's sheds, women's centres, Indigenous rangers, publishing houses, schools, aged care centres, TV and radio stations, broadcasting corporations, culture and learning centres, language centres, archives and libraries, arts and cultural festivals, media production centres, peak bodies and relevant government departments. In order to ensure that all individuals from the target population had a chance to be selected and represented in the survey, we adopted the following strategies when finding survey respondents:

- Potential respondents were located via connections to one of the regional organisations as indicated above, or via family members working with these organisations, or were approached in public spaces in the various survey locations.
- The interviewers explained the nature and objectives of the survey to potential respondents, who were then asked whether they would be willing to participate in the survey.
- Potential respondents were then asked screening questions to allow for elimination of ineligible respondents.

When the interviews were completed and the full final dataset was available for analysis, it was possible to compare relevant characteristics of the sample of artists with those of the target population to determine weights, as described further in Section 4.5 below.

The survey interviews were conducted in the following locations in the study region: Yuendumu, Papunya, Haasts Bluff, Areyonga, Hermannsburg, Tjuwanpa, Santa Teresa, Alice Springs, Yulara, Mutitjulu, Umuwa, Pukatja, Mimili, Fregon, Amata and Nyapari. The researchers received necessary research permissions to enter these communities and conduct the interviews, with full cooperation and engagement from the communities, local organisations and relevant peak bodies.

The research team undertook a scoping trip to the study region in July 2017, when the draft questionnaire was tested with local Indigenous consultants to make sure it addressed local particularities of artistic and cultural production in the region. On the basis of the feedback received, the draft survey instrument was revised and subsequently prepared in its final form. The main fieldwork involving interviews with artists in the Central Desert and APY Lands took place between March and May 2018. The survey was administered by computer-assisted face-to-face interviews in English or, when it was required, with the assistance of a translator/interpreter.

### 4.5 CALCULATION OF WEIGHTS

The survey yielded a sample size of 132 artists. In order to determine how representative our survey sample is of the entire population of the regional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander artists, we compared the socio-demographic characteristics of the obtained sample with the corresponding characteristics of the target population derived from NATSISS data; this population comprises Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander adults in remote and very remote areas of the Northern Territory and South Australia who had participated in the creative artistic activities discussed in Section 4.3 above. Since the study region crosses State/Territory boundaries, we calculate weights separately for SA and NT.

NATSISS data for most regions allow stratification by age and gender. However, the 2014–15 NATSISS data for NT and SA do not allow valid stratification by age because of very high relative standard errors (greater than 50 percent) for these statistics, which make results unreliable. Thus we were only able to compare our sample with the NATSISS data for

gender. Note, however, that the data are sufficient to calculate separate weights for "remote" and "very remote" areas in NT, and for "very remote" areas in SA. We do not calculate weights for "remote" areas in SA because the survey does not cover any "remote" areas there. It needs to be noted that all weights are calculated to adjust only for gender differences and not for State/Territory or remote/very remote residential differences; in other words, we are concerned with how well our sample represents artists' gender and not how well it represents where artists reside within the region.

Table 4.2 shows the calculation of weights according to the above procedures. The results indicate that some corrections were needed to adjust for gender differences between the sample and the target population. The calculated weights shown in the last row of the table were applied to the raw data to obtain estimates adjusted to reflect the gender characteristics of the target population. As a result of these procedures, we can take our results to be broadly representative of the population of adult Indigenous artists in the Central Desert and APY Lands region, subject to normal caveats concerning statistical inference. It is the weighted data that are shown in all subsequent tables in this Report.

**Table 4.2 Comparison of our sample with NATSISS data by gender showing calculation of weights****

| | South Australia | | | | Northern Territory | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Remote | | Very remote | | Remote | | Very remote | |
| | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male |
| Our sample, % | * | * | 67.3 | 32.7 | 71.4 | 28.6 | 71.4 | 28.6 |
| NATSISS 2014-15, % | * | * | 68.8 | 31.3 | 60.9 | 39.1 | 55.0 | 45.0 |
| **Weights applied in the survey** | * | * | **1.02** | **0.96** | **0.85** | **1.37** | **0.77** | **1.57** |

* The study area does not include any remote areas in SA.

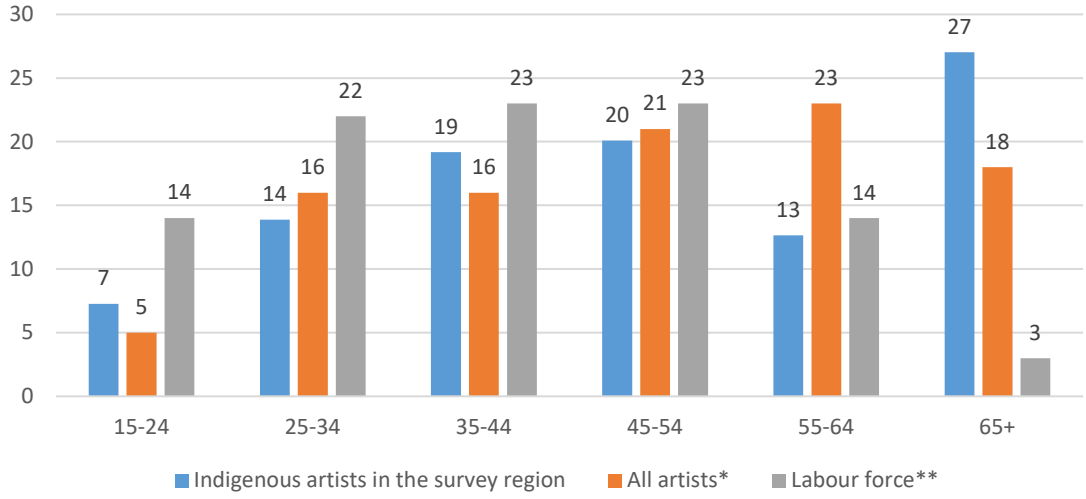
** For method, see text.

# 5. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ARTISTS IN THE CENTRAL DESERT/APY LANDS REGION

The sample of 132 comprised weighted numbers of 81 female and 51 male (an unweighted female/male ratio of roughly 60/40). A full discussion of gender issues in the survey results is contained in Section 11 of this Report. Note also that education, a major socio-demographic characteristic, is discussed in detail in Section 7.

The age distribution of artists in the region is shown in Figure 5.1 in comparison with all Australia practising professional artists and the Australian labour force as a whole. The age distribution of the Australian labour force reflects the life cycle pattern of the average worker; however, practising professional artists are different in that they tend to continue working beyond the usual retirement age. The age distribution of Indigenous artists in the Central Desert/APY Lands region is different again. It appears to follow a bimodal distribution, with a majority in the 35–55 age range but with a significant concentration of numbers in the post-65 age group. The artists in the latter group are predominantly older painters who have been working in a regular pattern for many years and continue to do so.

**Figure 5.1 Age distribution of Central Desert/APY Lands artists, all Australian artists and Australian labour force (percent)**




**Making Art Work* 2017
**ABS Census 2016

Table 5.1 shows the main language groups represented in the survey. A number of respondents speak more than one Indigenous language as well as English. The table shows the single language group identified by the artists as the one to which they belong. In the survey, respondents were also asked which language they use most these days; the pattern by and large follows the same distribution as in Table 5.1. Overall, 93 percent of artists in remote areas in the region use their traditional language most these days, six percent said they mostly used English, and one percent said they used a language other than English or their traditional language. We can compare these figures with the 2014-15 NATSISS data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists[12] in remote/very remote areas of Australia. The

[12] Those who participated in the creative artistic activities as defined by NATSISS in the last 12 months prior to the survey interviews.

NATSISS data show that artists use their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander language more than non-artists (48 percent compared to 38 percent respectively).

**Table 5.1 Language group (percent of respondents)**

| Language group | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Pitjantjatjara | 63 | 47 |
| Warlpiri | 25 | 19 |
| Western Arrernte | 16 | 12 |
| Luritja (also known as Pintupi-Luritja) | 10 | 7 |
| Eastern Arrernte | 9 | 7 |
| Yankunytjatjara | 5 | 4 |
| Ngaanyatjarra | 2 | 2 |
| Anmatyerre | 2 | 2 |
| **Total** | **132** | **100** |

Other socio-demographic characteristics of the sample include domestic arrangements and the incidence of disability. In regard to the former, one quarter of the artists are single with no children and a further quarter are single with children. About two in five are living with a partner and children.

Whilst the proportion of regional artists who live with a disability or long-term illness is high (42 percent), only ten percent of these artists said that their disability had a negative effect on their work "all of the time" or "most of the time". It may be that Indigenous individuals with disability are inclined to turn to art-making because of the work flexibility involved, or the support that is provided for them at art centres. Further discussion of these issues is contained in Section 11 below in the context of gender-related differences.

In terms of the geographical distribution of the sample, 16 percent of respondents reside in remote areas and the rest in very remote areas of the region, as shown in Table 5.2; 42 percent of all respondents are located in SA and 58 percent are from NT. We discuss some differences between these two jurisdictions in Section 12 of this Report, where some comparisons are drawn between the data for SA and NT artists considered separately.

**Table 5.2 State/Territory and remoteness (percent of respondents)**

| | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Remote NT | 21 | 16 |
| Very remote NT | 56 | 42 |
| Very remote SA | 55 | 42 |
| **Total** | **132** | **100** |

## 6. ARTISTS' CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

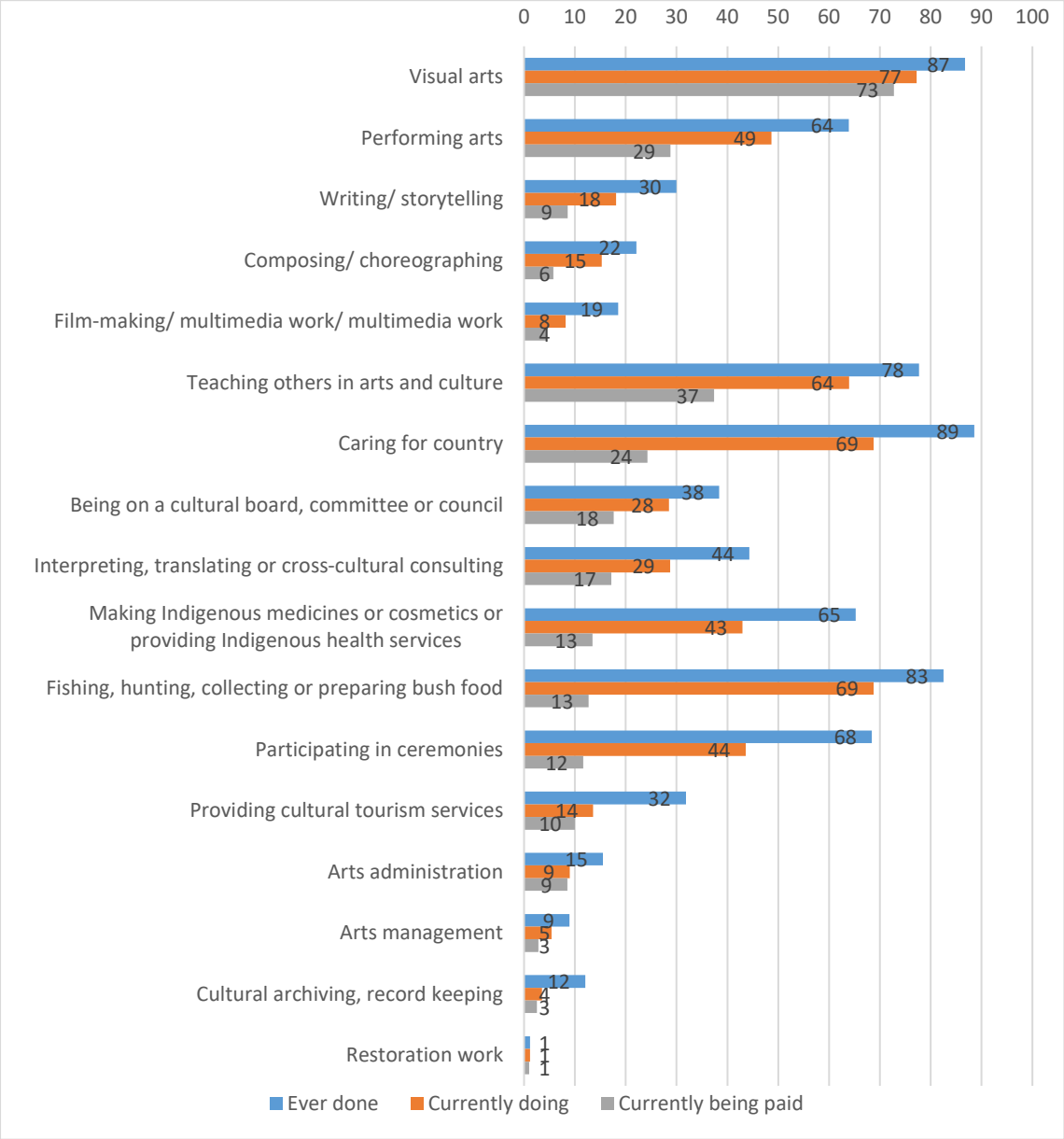
We have noted earlier that art production by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cannot be studied in isolation but must be considered in the context of the full extent of artists' cultural engagement. As noted in Section 2, in this study, we identify a wide range of art and culture related activities that we classify into two groups: creative artistic activities and other cultural activities. Table 6.1 shows the proportions of artists in the region who have ever during their lifetime engaged in the various activities, the proportions who have been involved in the activities during the last 12 months, and the proportions who are paid for these activities. The same data are displayed in diagrammatic form in Figure 6.1. The very wide range of cultural practice and participation that artists have engaged in or are currently doing is noteworthy. Within creative art practices, the most prominent art form in the Central Desert/APY Lands region is visual arts, with just over three-quarters of survey respondents currently working in this field. Among other cultural activities, the most prevalent are the traditional cultural practices of caring for country, fishing/hunting/collecting/preparing bush food, making Indigenous medicines/cosmetics, providing Indigenous health services, and participating in ceremonies, as well as the continuing process of passing on cultural knowledge to others.

**Table 6.1 Cultural-economic activities undertaken by artists (percent of all respondents)**

| Activities** | Have ever done | Currently doing* (n=132) | Currently being paid* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | % | |
| **Creative artistic** | | | |
| Visual arts | 87 | 77 | 73 |
| Performing arts | 64 | 49 | 29 |
| Writing/ storytelling | 29 | 18 | 9 |
| Composing/ choreographing | 22 | 15 | 6 |
| Film-making/ multimedia work | 19 | 8 | 4 |
| **Other cultural activities** | | | |
| Teaching others in arts and culture | 78 | 64 | 37 |
| Caring for country | 89 | 69 | 24 |
| Being on a cultural board, committee or council | 38 | 28 | 18 |
| Interpreting, translating or cross-cultural consulting | 44 | 29 | 17 |
| Making Indigenous medicines or cosmetics or providing Indigenous health services | 65 | 43 | 13 |
| Fishing, hunting, collecting or preparing bush food | 83 | 69 | 13 |
| Participating in ceremonies | 68 | 44 | 12 |
| Providing cultural tourism services | 32 | 14 | 10 |
| Arts administration | 15 | 9 | 9 |
| Arts management | 9 | 5 | 3 |
| Cultural archiving, record keeping | 12 | 4 | 3 |

* In the last 12 months.
** Multiple responses allowed.

**Figure 6.1 Cultural-economic activities undertaken by artists (percent of all respondents)**




The extent of artists' cultural engagement is further illustrated in Table 6.2, which shows the average number of different creative activities that artists in the region have ever done or are currently undertaking, i.e. have undertaken in the last 12 months prior to the survey interviews. On average, an artist in the Central Desert/APY Lands region has engaged in seven or eight cultural economic activities at some time in their life. At the present time, she or he is engaged in about two artistic activities and about four to five other cultural activities. This average artist receives some form of income for her/his work in at least one of the artistic activities and about two other cultural activities. These data are analysed in more detail in Section 9, where we consider artists' financial circumstances.

**Table 6.2 Average number of cultural economic activities undertaken by artists**

| Activities | Have ever done | Currently doing* | Currently being paid* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | no. of activities | |
| Creative artistic | 2.2 | 1.7 | 1.3 |
| Other cultural | 5.3 | 4.6 | 1.7 |
| **All cultural activities** | **7.5** | **6.3** | **2.9** |

* In the last 12 months

The data in these tables suggest that there is a gap between the numbers who have experience in a particular activity and those actually doing it. This point is examined more directly in Table 6.3, which shows the numbers of respondents currently engaged in each activity as a proportion of those who have experience in that activity; the same data are shown diagrammatically in Figure 6.2, where the proportions are arranged in descending order. We note that only about three-quarters of respondents who have practised some artistic activity in the past are currently engaged in it. In particular, for example, fewer than half of those with experience in film-making or multimedia work are able to practise in this field. The data also indicate that about three in five artists with experience in cultural tourism are currently not engaged in this activity. In addition, there appears to be a large underutilised pool of artists with experience in cultural archiving. This can probably be explained by the fact that even though there have been a number of cultural archiving projects and initiatives over the years in the region, the majority of these projects were not continuous; as a result, those people who acquired the necessary skills to do such work were not able to continue working in archiving once the funds had run out and the projects had stopped. There are also significant numbers of artists in the region with experience in arts management and arts administration who are not engaged in these activities currently. Of course, circumstances differ between individuals, and there may be many reasons for non-engagement at present – sometimes artists want to spend full-time focusing on their artistic practice, but at other times they may be looking for opportunities to supplement their incomes with casual or part-time work that activities such as cultural tourism, for example, could provide. Nevertheless, in aggregate the data discussed here point to the availability of significant levels of cultural and human capital in the Central Desert/APY Lands region that might be capable of further deployment in art and cultural production.

In the survey, we also asked respondents about seasonality of the cultural-economic activities that are being practised. In this region, it appears that the great majority of activities are being practised all year around. Some, however, do fluctuate to some extent with the seasons. For example, cultural tourism, harvesting activities, caring for country and ceremonies do exhibit some seasonality – about 10 to 15 percent of all respondents indicated that they practised these activities only at certain seasons during the year. Nevertheless, the remainder of respondents said they engaged in these activities during all seasons. Writing/storytelling is the most seasonal among artistic activities – 16 percent of those artists who engage in writing/storytelling do it during some seasons only. All other activities are practised at any time of the year by more than 90 percent of respondents.

To sum up, the data presented in this section demonstrate the central role played by creative artistic practice in the lives of artists in the Central Desert/APY Lands region, and the significance of these activities in generating income. The results also attest to the continuing significance of longstanding practices involving cultural maintenance – caring for country, harvesting activities, cultural governance, participating in ceremonies. We consider the financial aspects of these various activities in Section 9.

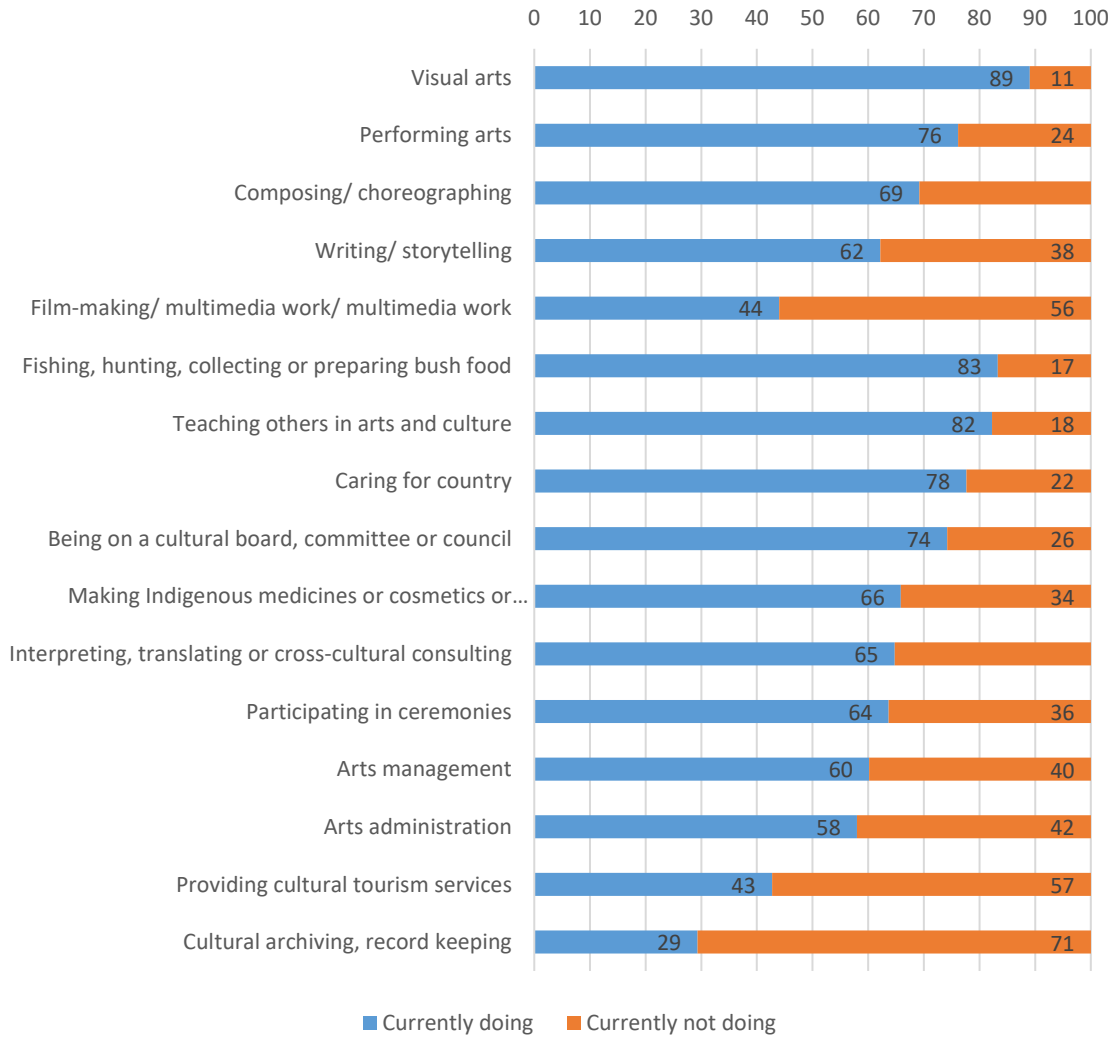
**Table 6.3 Proportions of artists with experience in activities currently engaged in those activities (percent of those with previous experience)**

| Activities* | | Currently doing | Currently not doing |
|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | |
| **Creative artistic activities** | | | |
| Visual arts | 114 | 89 | 11 |
| Performing arts | 84 | 76 | 24 |
| Writing/ storytelling | 39 | 62 | 38 |
| Composing/ choreographing | 29 | 69 | 31 |
| Film-making/ multimedia work | 24 | 44 | 56 |
| **Weighted average for creative artistic activities** | | **76** | **24** |
| **Other cultural activities** | | | |
| Teaching others in arts and culture | 103 | 82 | 18 |
| Caring for country | 117 | 78 | 22 |
| Being on a cultural board, committee or council | 51 | 74 | 26 |
| Interpreting, translating or cross-cultural consulting | 58 | 65 | 35 |
| Making Indigenous medicines or cosmetics or providing Indigenous health services | 86 | 66 | 34 |
| Fishing, hunting, collecting or preparing bush food | 109 | 83 | 17 |
| Participating in ceremonies | 90 | 64 | 36 |
| Providing cultural tourism services | 42 | 43 | 57 |
| Arts administration | 20 | 58 | 42 |
| Arts management | 12 | 60 | 40 |
| Cultural archiving, record keeping | 16 | 29 | 71 |
| **Weighted average for other cultural activities** | | **71** | **29** |

- indicates nil response in this sample.

* Multiple responses allowed.

**Figure 6.2 Proportions of artists with experience in activities currently engaged in those activities (percent of those with previous experience)**



# 7. ACQUISITION OF CULTURAL CAPITAL

An Indigenous artist living and working in remote Australia may receive education and training necessary for professional artistic practice in a variety of ways. Apart from formal education, learning and teaching occurs among the family and other community members at home, in art centres, on country, in ceremonies and so on. In this survey, we distinguish between: (1) formal education, which includes the usual processes of schooling and other general education that provides a wide range of knowledge and competencies; (2) cultural education, imparting knowledge and skills required for participating in cultural activities and gaining permissions to practise cultural work within certain cultural laws; and (3) specific training required for practising in a particular artistic occupation.

The boundaries between these three are not easily distinguishable, and the knowledge and skills acquired may be applied in many different ways. Some arts-related education and training could be undertaken as part of formal education processes, for example at school or university. Cultural knowledge and skills such as body painting or language could be applied in different art forms and diverse cultural activities, while skills acquired through professional artistic practice, such as writing or audio-recording skills, could be utilised across a range of cultural activities such as cultural archiving, and in work that is not directly related to culture, for example in producing audio-visual material of other than cultural content.

In this section we present data on all these pathways by which artists acquire their cultural capital.

## 7.1 FORMAL EDUCATION

The formal education pathway begins in school. Primary and secondary schooling provides essential skills in literacy, numeracy and so on, and may include specific artistic and cultural education. The latter may involve practical experience for students – for example, senior artists and cultural producers might be formally or informally invited to a local school to teach school children culture and language classes, or the school could arrange for their students to come to an art centre to get some hands-on experience with the art centre artists. Children at school could also learn from an art professional from outside of their community. For some artists, formal education may continue to the post-school level leading to college of university qualifications.

In the survey, we asked respondents to indicate the highest level of formal education or training they have completed. This includes general education and training in non-arts as well as formal arts education that is not related to respondents' cultural knowledge. The results are summarised in Table 7.1. The table also shows the corresponding distribution among the general Indigenous adult population in remote and very remote areas of the NT using the 2014-15 NATSISS data. Among different art forms, visual artists appear to be less highly educated in formal education than other Indigenous artists in the study region – almost half of visual artists in the region did not attain higher than Year 9 in formal education. Performing artists, however, appear to be somewhat more highly educated than other artists. These results reflect in part the age distributions of the two artist populations – the preponderance of older individuals among visual artists means that that art form has relatively more people whose school education would have been at the time when the educational services and facilities were not easily available to their communities, or indeed non-existent.

**Table 7.1 Highest levels of formal education (percent of respondents)**

| Level of education | Indigenous artists in the study region | | | Indigenous labour force in remote and very remote NT |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Visual (n=93) | Performing (n=34) | All (n=132) | |
| | | | % | |
| No schooling | * | - | * | * |
| Completed Year 9 (or equivalent) and below | 48 | 30 | 41 | 17 |
| Completed Year 10 (or equivalent) | 8 | 18 | 12 | 24 |
| Completed Diploma or Certificate[13] | 12 | - | 8 | 29 |
| Completed Year 11 (or equivalent) | 8 | 24 | 12 | 18 |
| Completed Year 12 (or equivalent) | 18 | 23 | 21 | 8 |
| Completed Bachelor Degree | * | 5 | 3 | ** |
| Completed Postgraduate Degree, Diploma or Certificate | - | - | - | *** |
| Other | 5 | - | 3 | 4 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

- indicates nil response in this sample.

* indicates less than 1%.

** Estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution.

*** Estimate has a relative standard error greater than 50% and is considered too unreliable for general use.

Comparison of the levels of educational attainment in the Central Desert/APY Lands region with the corresponding data for the whole Indigenous labour force in remote and very remote NT does not show significant differences, as results in Table 7.1 demonstrate. A further comparison with similar educational statistics for all Australian artists drawn from *Making Art Work* 2017 indicates that artists in mainstream Australia access much higher educational levels than their remote Indigenous counterparts. It is apparent that for the latter artists it is not formal education that provides the most essential training for participation in arts and cultural production, as we shall see further below.

### 7.2 CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

The pathways via which artists acquire their cultural knowledge are shown in Table 7.2. Respondents to the survey were asked to identify all the different ways, in which they learned about their culture, and then to nominate which of these was the most important single source. Overwhelmingly artists in the Central Desert/APY Lands region gain their cultural knowledge directly from family members, elders or other community members through

[13] In our survey, responses of artists who have diplomas and certificates at different levels are combined. In NATSISS, the following hierarchy is used: Diplomas are below Bachelor degrees and above Certificates III/ IV, Certificates III/ IV are below Diplomas and above Year 12, Certificates I/ II are below Year 10 and above Year 9, and "Certificates not further defined" are below "Year 9 and below".

processes of inter- and intra-generational cultural transmission. Learning culture from family members is both the most common way (92 percent) and the most important pathway (78 percent) for artists to acquire such knowledge. Elders and other community members are a highly significant source, with about two thirds of artists identifying it as such and 15 percent believing it was the most important in their cultural education.

**Table 7.2 Important pathways for acquiring cultural knowledge (percent of all respondents)**

| Cultural knowledge pathways | Important pathways** | Most important pathway |
|---|---|---|
| | (n=132) | |
| | % | |
| Directly from family members | 92 | 78 |
| Directly from elders and/ or other community members | 65 | 15 |
| From being on country | 59 | 5 |
| From participating in ceremonies | 45 | 2 |
| From artworks, songs or stories | 33 | * |
| From festivals or other cultural events | 6 | - |
| Some other way | 1 | - |
| **Total** | | **100** |

- indicates nil response in this sample.
* indicates less than 1%.
** Multiple responses allowed.

It is noteworthy that a majority of respondents identify learning from being on country as important – almost 60 percent – and for 5 percent of respondents this represents the most important pathway. Frequently "learning on country" is closely associated with "learning from family members", as cultural education on country usually occurs with the guidance of a family or community member.[14]

In this region festivals are not particularly common; hence the data show very few respondents who see learning from festivals or other cultural events as having been important to them for learning about their culture. Some interviewees explained that festivals and other cultural events are rather perceived as an opportunity to teach others (usually outsiders) about their culture rather than as a means for learning for themselves. It can be noted that performances in festivals are sometimes altered for an outsider audience so as not to disclose important ceremonial information; in such cases they do not work as a within-community teaching tool, other than perhaps as a means of demonstrating how to teach outsiders.

### 7.3 ART INDUSTRY SKILLS

Artistic practice requires skills, i.e. technical ability to work with artistic materials such as paint, clay, or film, or to use equipment such as a video camera, screen-printing equipment,

[14] "Family members" may include ancestral spirits; in some interviews respondents referred to being given knowledge on country through their ancestral spirit talking to them.

a sound system or editing software. There are multiple ways by which Indigenous artists in remote communities can acquire skills necessary for their artistic occupations. For artists working in the Central Desert/APY Lands region, the pathways are summarised in Table 7.3. Once again, it is learning from a family member that is both the most common and the most important source of knowledge, whether or not the learning includes participation as well as just observation. Other significant avenues include self-learning and learning on the job, workshops, school, and mentorship (for example from art centre staff or from an experienced artist from outside the community).

**Table 7.3 Important pathways for gaining industry skills and experience (percent of all respondents)**

| Industry skills pathways | Important pathways** | Most important pathway |
|---|---|---|
| | (n=132) | |
| | % | |
| Learning from a family member: | 71 | 51 |
| Participating with and observing from a family member | 45 | 29 |
| Only observing from a family member | 42 | 22 |
| Learning from a friend or community member: | 46 | 15 |
| Participating with and observing from a friend or community member | 28 | 7 |
| Only observing from a friend or community member | 24 | 8 |
| Self-learning | 48 | 13 |
| School | 43 | 8 |
| Mentorship with an art professional | 21 | 8 |
| Learning on the job | 20 | 1 |
| University program | 4 | 1 |
| Workshops/ short courses | 43 | * |
| Vocational training | 6 | - |
| Online sources | 5 | - |
| Some other way | 14 | 3 |
| **Total** | | **100** |

- indicates nil response in this sample.

* indicates less than 1%.

** Multiple responses allowed.

Notwithstanding the importance of intergenerational transmission as a pathway by which artists acquire their cultural skills, the significance of other avenues should not be downplayed. School, for example, provides essential skills, which are a prerequisite to other forms of learning, while the role of mentorship, short courses and workshops is indicated in the data. In the latter case, the one-day weaving workshops provided on a regular basis by Tjanpi Desert Weavers in art centres in the APY Lands are an exemplary illustration of the

effectiveness of this mode of learning, teaching skills that could not easily be acquired in any other way, and providing a direct access to market for the outputs produced.

### 7.4 CONCLUSION

All of the pathways considered above, whether through formal schooling or the processes of inter- and intra-generational cultural transmission, can be seen as providing competencies that enable Indigenous people in the Central Desert/APY region to engage in economically productive activity, while maintaining the inalienable connection with their culture. At the same time, it is important to note that these pathways also provide competencies and skills that are relevant to a wide variety of jobs in the cultural economy and in the wider labour market.

## 8. TIME ALLOCATION

Consideration of work arrangements for artists, both existing and potential, needs to have data on how they choose to spend their time across all the cultural and non-cultural activities that they undertake. In addition, if possibilities for increased labour market participation are to be discussed, information is required on constraints affecting artists' time allocation in different areas. We have emphasised throughout this Report that art production cannot be seen as an isolated activity that can be independently studied but must be interpreted in the context of the artist's whole life and pattern of activity. To speak of "work", in describing the ways in which Indigenous artists spend their time, is something of a misnomer; there is no clear line between "work" and "life" for these cultural producers. Indeed, cultural activities are understood as "work" by Aboriginal people (Austin-Broos 2006), consistent with the fact that ceremonial activities are sometimes called "business".

Notwithstanding these definitional issues, in this survey we asked respondents questions about time they spent specifically on the sixteen cultural-economic activities covered by the survey. Prompt questions were used to enquire if, for example, "every working day" meant four to five days a week, or if "a full day" meant working in the morning and afternoon with 7.6 hours of work in a typical day. For our calculations we also assume 48 weeks a year on average.

The average time spent by survey respondents in the last 12 months on various activities, calculated for each activity as a proportion of the numbers of artists currently engaged in that activity, is shown in Table 8.1. The table also shows an average score for the time spent at each activity, according to the scale indicated at the foot of the table. Thus, for example, writing/story-telling occupies just over one day per month on average for artists engaged in this activity. It needs to be remembered that artists undertake multiple activities as we discussed in Section 6 (see Table 6.1).

Some general patterns emerge from these data. First, as might be expected, creative arts activities absorb the largest amounts of artists' time when considered across the full range of activities. In particular, more than half of the artists in the region work in visual arts more or less full-time, i.e. roughly 4–5 days in an average week. We see this pattern reproduced frequently in the region among painters and weavers who come on a daily basis to an art centre or paint/weave from home and work all or most of the day. For those artists engaged in performing arts, on the other hand, the pattern of time allocation is more widely distributed, with the average time at their artistic activity adding up to something less than one full day a week – for example, musicians will often gather towards the end of a day for a few hours or on a weekend to practise with their band. Time spent on other creative work – film-making, composing, writing – could be undertaken throughout a week with a few hours spent doing this work here and there; it tends to amount to about one full day per week or less for most producers. Nevertheless, one-fifth of film-makers and multimedia artists work full-time.

**Table 8.1 Time spent on activities in the last 12 months (percent of those currently engaged in the activity)**

| Activities | N | 4–5 full days/ week | 2–3 full days/ week | 1 full day/ week | 1-2 full days/ month | Few full days/ year | Total | Weighted average score** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | % | | | | | | |
| **Creative artistic activities** | | | | | | | | |
| Visual arts | 102 | 58 | 22 | 9 | 10 | 1 | **100** | **4.3** |
| Performing arts | 64 | 12 | 19 | 24 | 31 | 14 | **100** | **2.8** |
| Writing/ storytelling | 24 | - | 7 | 17 | 33 | 43 | **100** | **2.2** |
| Composing/ choreographing | 20 | 5 | 20 | 33 | 20 | 22 | **100** | **2.7** |
| Film-making/ multimedia work | 11 | 21 | 20 | 15 | 44 | - | **100** | **3.2** |
| **Other cultural activities** | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching others in arts and culture | 84 | 7 | 12 | 34 | 30 | 17 | **100** | **2.6** |
| Caring for country | 91 | * | - | 18 | 45 | 36 | **100** | **1.8** |
| Being on a cultural board, committee or council | 38 | - | 5 | 2 | 35 | 59 | **100** | **1.5** |
| Interpreting, translating or cross-cultural consulting | 38 | - | 3 | 31 | 37 | 29 | **100** | **2.1** |
| Making Indigenous medicines or cosmetics or providing Indigenous health services | 57 | - | - | 10 | 46 | 44 | **100** | **1.7** |
| Fishing, hunting, collecting or preparing bush food | 91 | * | 6 | 30 | 46 | 18 | **100** | **2.3** |
| Participating in ceremonies | 57 | - | - | 16 | 39 | 45 | **100** | **1.7** |
| Providing cultural tourism services | 18 | 4 | - | 4 | 23 | 69 | **100** | **1.5** |
| Arts administration | 12 | 7 | 35 | 38 | 20 | - | **100** | **3.3** |
| Arts management | 7 | 14 | - | 64 | 22 | - | **100** | **3.0** |
| Cultural archiving, record keeping | 5 | - | - | - | 17 | 83 | **100** | **1.2** |
| Restoration work | 2 | - | - | - | - | 100 | **100** | **1.0** |
| **Other activities (not directly related to culture)** | | | | | | | | |
| Other activities | 34 | 51 | 16 | 12 | 21 | - | **100** | **4.0** |

- indicates nil response in this sample.
* indicates less than 1%.
** 1 indicates “few full days/year”; 2 indicates “1-2 full days/month”; 3 indicates “1 full day/week”; 4 indicates “2-3 full days/week”; 5 indicates “4-5 full days/week”. Excludes “Don't know/ Not sure” responses.

Turning to other cultural activities, we note that time spent on a number of them is somewhat sporadic, depending on circumstances and the availability of work; examples include interpreting, translating, working with tourists, or sitting on some arts and cultural boards or committees. There are only a few individuals in the region who derive something close to full-time work from any of the other cultural activities listed – for example, those with secure employment in administrative or managerial positions in art centres or other organisations, or the small number of artists who can work full-time in cultural tourism; a consequence is that these artists spend a reduced time on their artistic practice. The amount of time devoted to going out bush for purposes such as caring for country, fishing, hunting or collecting bush food varies with the location of the individual; for some, access is close by and these activities can be engaged in more frequently, for others going on country may only be possible rarely. Teaching others in arts and culture is another activity that takes a significant amount of time for Indigenous artists in the region – up to one full day a week for one-third of respondents.

An alternative way of representing our data on time allocations to various activities is to convert the time estimates on which Table 8.1 is based into the equivalent in hours per week. This requires us to make a series of plausible assumptions as to the average weekly hours implied by each category of frequency of involvement, and to apply these assumptions to the individual response records in order to calculate hours spent by each respondent in each activity. The resulting estimates of time spent per week are shown in Table 8.2 for the major groupings of activities. We can see that on average artists spend more than half their time (55 percent) at creative work in a week, and about one-third of their time (34 percent) on other cultural activities. Altogether, the data imply that on average artists spend about seven hours daily divided between the sixteen arts and cultural activities identified in this study, as well as some non-cultural work.

**Table 8.2 Mean and median number of hours that artists spent on activities in the last 12 months (hours)**

| Hours spent on… (n=130) * | Mean | Median |
|---|---|---|
| | Hours | |
| Creative artistic activities | 26 | 32 |
| Other cultural activities | 16 | 13 |
| **Total arts and cultural activities** | **42** | **38** |
| Other activities (not directly related to culture) | 6 | 0 |
| **Total working hours** | **47** | **45** |

* Excludes outliers.

The various results shown in these tables can be explained by a number of factors affecting participation in different cultural activities in the Central Desert and APY Lands region, including: seasonality of work; limited transportation options; lack of access to facilities or equipment on a regular basis; road closures during certain times of the year; variations in demand for artists' services; and occasionally the need to undertake multiple activities at the

same time. Indeed, having to balance their time between multiple activities is a common factor that affects many artists throughout their career, beginning in the early stages. Once culturally educated they may be subject to many competing possibilities to apply these learnt cultural skills and knowledge, and there are also demands from their families or communities and from organisations that rely on such skills in their employees. Both possibilities and demands continue to grow as the knowledge and skills of the artist increases. This is why many senior artists often find themselves in a situation where at the peak of their artistic career they have to put aside their art work and take on more cultural responsibilities, such as cultural governance and leadership, education, providing cross-cultural advice, as well as having to spend increased time on ceremonies.

We have already noted that some artists take on work outside the cultural sector. Of those artists who work outside the arts at other activities not directly related to culture, about half (51 percent) do so for 4–5 days per week, i.e. more or less full-time. In the Central Desert/APY Lands region, artists work as aged/child/youth care workers, school teachers and coordinators, community service patrollers, municipal workers, employment consultants, administrators, livestock workers, gardeners, drivers, check-out workers at local shops, road workers, and so on. Some people may work at one of these occupations for a time, and then move to another.

Overall the data in Tables 8.1 and 8.2 paint a picture of artists in the region as being cultural producers with multiple and interconnected ways in which they allocate their time on creative work and on other cultural activities. There is clearly a mix between work that will generate an income and activities undertaken for cultural or social reasons; artists balance these types of work in line with their financial, social and cultural needs. The various demands on artists' time may act as a constraint on their capacity to undertake more income-yielding employment. However, for some cultural practitioners these multiple demands may also contribute to their art – for example, participating in ceremonies may impart additional cultural knowledge, which in turn informs their art.

We consider artists' preferences over the ways, in which they spend their time, and some of the specific constraints on their time allocation patterns in Section 10.3.

# 9. FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

One of the most important objectives of the National Survey of Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists is to assess the extent to which art and cultural production can provide a means towards employment creation and income generation for Indigenous people in remote communities. To consider this objective in empirical terms, a range of information is needed on the financial circumstances of cultural producers – how many of their various cultural activities are paid, what are their main sources of income, and how is their total income from all sources comprised. This section presents the survey results on these issues for the Central Desert/APY Lands region.

## 9.1 PAID AND UNPAID ACTIVITIES

In the previous section, we discussed the amounts of time spent at various activities by artists in the last 12 months. Not all of this time is paid for. Table 9.1 shows the proportions of artists who are paid and not paid when engaged in various activities in the last 12 months. These data are also shown in Figure 9.1, where the creative and other cultural activities respectively are arranged in descending order of the proportions of artists who are paid.

The pattern of paid/unpaid for creative work varies between art forms. The great majority (95 percent) of visual artists who practised their art in the last 12 months received some financial return from it. However, only about 60 percent of musicians, actors and other performers were paid, and even fewer writers and film-makers. The numbers of composers making money from their work are particularly low (fewer than 40 percent) – these artists comprise songwriters and other musicians who might only be paid royalties from time to time.

Some portion of the unpaid work for creative artistic activities depicted in these data can be construed as activity undertaken purely for cultural learning (including transmission of cultural knowledge), own enjoyment, enjoyment shared with others, or as part of ceremony. However, some of the work that remains unpaid could be interpreted as producing output for which the artist is unable to access a market, as is the case for some musicians. In other situations, unpaid production might be aimed at building up a body of work for further development. Sometimes artists are expected to provide their services free on a pro-bono basis. During the survey interviews, respondents talked about a number of other reasons for undertaking artistic activities that may or may not be paid, such as “keeping my culture strong” or “keeping me and others positive”, or “strengthening my connection to others”. Some younger respondents saw art production as a way of “keeping me and others away from trouble”.

So much for creative arts work. In the case of other cultural activities, some is done on a voluntary basis, although it is apparent that some types of work will be undertaken in expectation of payment, such as working in an art centre, providing services to tourists, cultural archiving and record keeping. Other activities may or may not be paid depending on circumstances – for example, some boards or committees on which Indigenous artists serve will involve some financial compensation, others will not. In some cases, fees are not paid but travel could be reimbursed. Caring for country is likely to be paid when undertaken as part of a formal ranger program or for providing environmental management advice to different agencies (usually paid as consulting fees). Harvesting activities are primarily for own and family use, though some may be paid. Participating in ceremonies is seen mainly as a cultural obligation, although some of this could also be paid.

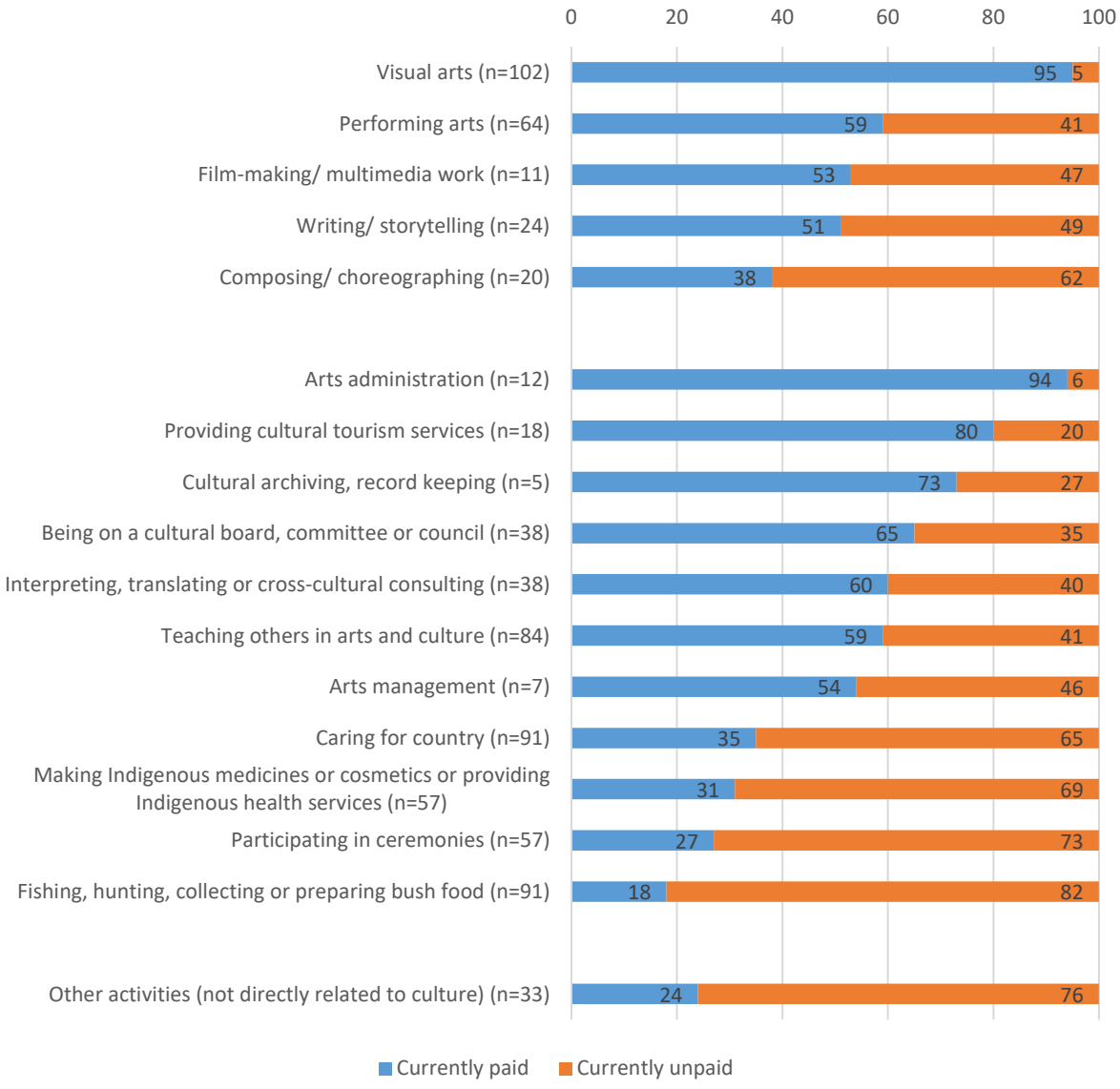
**Table 9.1 Proportion of artists paid and not paid for cultural activities (percent of those who engaged in each activity in the last 12 months)**

| Activities | N | Currently paid | Currently unpaid | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | % | | |
| **Creative artistic activities** | | | | |
| Visual arts | 102 | 95 | 5 | **100** |
| Performing arts | 64 | 59 | 41 | **100** |
| Writing/ storytelling | 24 | 51 | 49 | **100** |
| Composing/ choreographing | 20 | 38 | 62 | **100** |
| Film-making/ multimedia work | 11 | 53 | 47 | **100** |
| **Other cultural activities** | | | | |
| Teaching others in arts and culture | 84 | 59 | 41 | **100** |
| Caring for country | 91 | 35 | 65 | **100** |
| Being on a cultural board, committee or council | 38 | 65 | 35 | **100** |
| Interpreting, translating or cross-cultural consulting | 38 | 60 | 40 | **100** |
| Making Indigenous medicines or cosmetics or providing Indigenous health services | 57 | 31 | 69 | **100** |
| Fishing, hunting, collecting or preparing bush food | 91 | 18 | 82 | **100** |
| Participating in ceremonies | 57 | 27 | 73 | **100** |
| Providing cultural tourism services | 18 | 80 | 20 | **100** |
| Arts administration | 12 | 94 | 6 | **100** |
| Arts management | 7 | 54 | 46 | **100** |
| Cultural archiving, record keeping | 5 | 73 | 27 | **100** |
| **Other activities (not directly related to culture)** | | | | |
| Other activities | 33 | 24 | 76 | **100** |

It is interesting to compare the paid/unpaid pattern for arts and cultural work to the paid/unpaid pattern for work that does not directly relate to culture. Table 9.1 and Figure 9.1 show that the great majority of artists in the region (just over three-quarters) are not paid for their non-cultural work. Indeed, in comparison to all other activities considered, non-cultural work is actually the least frequently paid activity, apart from fishing and hunting. This could partly be due to the fact that many of those engaged in non-cultural work are Community Development Program (CDP) participants. The CDP does not provide a real wage that would be equivalent to the minimum wage in Australia or above; it is a form of

job-related assistance for unemployed people in remote areas.[15] This is why in this survey we treat CDP payments as "government benefits" and not as income that is derived from work, whether they are made for arts/cultural work or non-cultural work. Nevertheless, the voluntary nature of the majority of non-cultural work in remote areas of the region points to the overall lack of job opportunities in these areas. In these settings, it is apparent that arts and cultural activities perform better than non-cultural activities in providing regional artists with relevant employment opportunities and associated incomes.

**Figure 9.1 Proportion of artists paid and not paid for cultural activities (percent of those who engaged in each activity in the last 12 months)**




[15] In order to access full unemployment benefits in remote areas, CDP participants are obligated to commit to 25 hours per week in Work for the Dole or up to their assessed work capacity, scheduled as five days per week.

## 9.2 SOURCES OF PAYMENT

Artists receive work-related income from organisations operating within three main sectors: the government, the private sector and the third sector (community and not-for-profit organisations). Occasionally artists may receive payment as individuals, such as when they sell a painting directly to a final buyer. In the survey, we asked respondents what sort of organisation(s) made payments to them for various types of work in the last 12 months. The results are summarised in Table 9.2. Given that the great majority of payments for artistic activity are derived from the third sector, the importance of this sector in providing employment and income opportunities to remote Indigenous artists cannot be overestimated. Nevertheless, the private sector also plays an important role, particularly for performing artists and composers, approximately 40 percent of whom receive payments from a private company or as individuals.

**Table 9.2 Work arrangements (percent of those paid for each activity in the last 12 months)**

| Activities** | | Private company | As an individual | Government or public organisation | Community/ non-for-profit organisation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | | | % | |
| **Creative artistic activities** | | | | | |
| Visual arts | 96 | - | 6 | * | 96 |
| Performing arts | 38 | 8 | 33 | 20 | 51 |
| Writing/ storytelling | 11 | 8 | 14 | 9 | 71 |
| Composing/ choreographing | 8 | - | 38 | - | 63 |
| Film-making/ multimedia work | 6 | - | - | 16 | 78 |
| **Other cultural activities** | | | | | |
| Teaching others in arts and culture | 50 | - | 4 | 64 | 59 |
| Caring for country | 32 | 3 | 8 | 46 | 60 |
| Being on a cultural board, committee or council | 23 | 7 | - | 34 | 92 |
| Interpreting, translating or cross-cultural consulting | 23 | 3 | 14 | 42 | 64 |
| Making Indigenous medicines or cosmetics or providing Indigenous health services | 18 | - | 15 | 41 | 54 |
| Fishing, hunting, collecting or preparing bush food | 17 | - | 5 | 48 | 62 |
| Participating in ceremonies | 15 | - | - | 49 | 81 |
| Providing cultural tourism services | 13 | 7 | 6 | 21 | 87 |
| Arts administration | 11 | - | 12 | - | 88 |
| Arts management | 4 | - | 34 | - | 61 |
| Cultural archiving, record keeping | 3 | - | - | 78 | 26 |
| **Other activities (not directly related to culture)** | | | | | |
| Other activities | 34 | 15 | - | 47 | 38 |

- indicates nil response in this sample.

* indicates less than 1%.

** Multiple responses allowed.

For almost all other cultural activities, it is also the third sector that is the main provider of incomes. However, incomes for cultural archiving/record keeping as well as teaching others mostly come from the government sector. As can be seen from Table 9.2, currently the private sector creates only a relatively small number of jobs in the cultural sector outside the arts. It would appear that there may be significant opportunities for this sector to engage in these activities further in the future.

### 9.3 IMPORTANCE OF INCOMES FROM CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

In the survey, respondents were asked about the significance of the payments from various activities, i.e. whether the revenue from these activities constituted a major income source or were simply small amounts of money that could be regarded as extra or incidental income. The results are shown in Table 9.3. For those engaged in visual arts and performing arts, it is noteworthy that despite the amounts of time these artists spend at their work, only between about 30 and 40 percent of them regard the income from these activities as comprising a major income source for them. In the case of those engaged in writing/storytelling, none can make a significant return from this work.

**Table 9.3 Perceived importance of income from cultural activities (percent of those paid for each activity in the last 12 months)**

| Activities | N | Major income | Extra income | Incidental income | Total | Weighted average score** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | % | | | | |
| **Creative artistic activities** | | | | | | |
| Visual arts | 96 | 33 | 27 | 40 | **100** | **1.9** |
| Performing arts | 38 | 12 | 19 | 69 | **100** | **1.4** |
| Writing/ storytelling | 11 | - | 72 | 28 | **100** | **1.7** |
| Composing/ choreographing | 8 | 41 | 41 | 18 | **100** | **2.2** |
| Film-making/ multimedia work | 6 | 58 | 28 | 14 | **100** | **2.4** |
| **Other cultural activities** | | | | | | |
| Teaching others in arts and culture | 50 | 26 | 18 | 56 | **100** | **1.7** |
| Caring for country | 32 | 8 | 22 | 70 | **100** | **1.4** |
| Being on a cultural board, committee or council | 23 | 8 | 25 | 67 | **100** | **1.2** |
| Interpreting, translating or cross-cultural consulting | 23 | 40 | 29 | 31 | **100** | **2.8** |
| Making Indigenous medicines or cosmetics or providing Indigenous health services | 18 | 10 | 18 | 72 | **100** | **1.4** |
| Fishing, hunting, collecting or preparing bush food | 17 | 11 | 9 | 80 | **100** | **1.3** |
| Participating in ceremonies | 15 | 5 | 11 | 84 | **100** | **1.2** |
| Providing cultural tourism services | 13 | - | 35 | 65 | **100** | **1.4** |
| Arts administration | 11 | 60 | - | 40 | **100** | **2.2** |
| Arts management | 4 | 64 | - | 36 | **100** | **2.3** |
| Cultural archiving, record keeping | 3 | 25 | 75 | - | **100** | **2.2** |

- indicates nil response in this sample

* indicates less than 1%

** 1 indicates “Incidental income”; 2 indicates “Extra income”; 3 indicates “Major income”. Excludes "Don't know/ Not sure" responses.

For other cultural activities, those involving full-time or part-time employment arrangements are likely to comprise a significant income source, whereas most other activities cannot be relied on for generating a constant stream of income. Demand for many of these activities is sporadic, such as for translating, interpreting or providing tourism services. For some artists, casual employment in these other activities is in fact advantageous, as it can fit in with all their other cultural and family obligations. In the absence of significant financial returns for these cultural activities, we can assume that at the moment they are mostly undertaken for reasons related to the maintenance and continuation of culture.

### 9.4 METHODS OF PAYMENT

The means of payment when income is received from different activities varies between sources, as Table 9.4 demonstrates. Works of visual artists are usually paid per piece (82 percent of all visual artists). Some sell directly to buyers without the intervention of an agent or gallery, but the majority of those who work in visual arts in the Central Desert/APY Lands region sell their work through an art centre, which may pay an agreed price for the work on receipt, or (more commonly) will pay the artists when the work is sold. Some art centres operate an income management arrangement for their artists, whereby the artist is paid a relatively small weekly allowance in cash or as a voucher for spending at the local store; the amounts of these payments are debited to the artist's account held by the centre. Implementation of this system is subject to the approval of the board and the artists. Although this procedure involves additional work for art centre staff, artists benefit by having a regular and reliable income stream for meeting their daily expenses, with their balance hopefully kept in credit through continuing sales of their work.

Artists in part-time or full-time employment, for example in an art centre or a school, also enjoy some regularity in their income. Almost a quarter of those artists who combine their artistic practice with other cultural employment such as in arts management, arts administration, interpreting/translating, cross-cultural consulting, or cultural archiving/record keeping enjoy being paid in full-time or near full-time salaries and wages. Yet for most other individuals, the method of payment is unlikely to lead to a regular inflow of money. The majority of cultural activities are paid on a fee-per-service basis, such as sitting fees for board members, which provides flexible work arrangements but depends on the nature and availability of the work involved. About 60 percent of writers and almost 30 percent of composers – most likely those with an established body of work (a book in print, a song being played on the radio, etc.) – are paid in the form of royalties. Four in five performing artists – musicians, singers, dancers and actors – are paid per service. Film-makers and multimedia artists usually receive hourly payments (42 percent) or work for casual wages (28 percent).

**Table 9.4 Methods of payment (percent of those currently paid for each activity)**

| Activities | N | Salaries/ wages full-time | Salaries/ wages part-time | Casual wages | Payments per piece | Fees per service | Hourly rate | Royalties/ licence fee | In-kind payments | Other | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Creative artistic activities** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Visual arts | 96 | 1 | - | - | 82 | * | - | * | - | 15 | **100** |
| Performing arts | 38 | - | 4 | 5 | - | 80 | 6 | 4 | - | - | **100** |
| Writing/ storytelling | 11 | - | - | - | 9 | 42 | 14 | 28 | - | 7 | **100** |
| Composing/ choreographing | 8 | - | - | - | - | 21 | 20 | 59 | - | - | **100** |
| Film-making/multimedia work | 6 | - | 14 | 28 | - | - | 42 | - | - | 17 | **100** |
| **Other cultural activities** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teaching others in arts and culture | 50 | 9 | 9 | 27 | - | 42 | 12 | - | 2 | - | **100** |
| Caring for country | 32 | 8 | - | 2 | - | 82 | 5 | - | 3 | - | **100** |
| Being on a cultural board, committee or council | 23 | 4 | - | 7 | - | 85 | - | - | 3 | - | **100** |
| Interpreting, translating or cross-cultural consulting | 23 | 23 | 16 | 8 | - | 42 | 11 | - | - | - | **100** |
| Making Indigenous medicines or cosmetics or providing Indigenous health services | 18 | 10 | - | - | 9 | 71 | 4 | - | 6 | - | **100** |
| Fishing, hunting, collecting or preparing bush food | 17 | 11 | - | - | - | 80 | 9 | - | - | - | **100** |
| Participating in ceremonies | 15 | 5 | - | - | - | 95 | - | - | - | - | **100** |
| Providing cultural tourism services | 13 | - | - | - | - | 76 | 24 | - | - | - | **100** |
| Arts administration | 11 | 25 | 35 | 28 | - | 12 | - | - | - | - | **100** |
| Arts management | 4 | 22 | 42 | - | - | 36 | - | - | - | - | **100** |
| Cultural archiving, record keeping | 3 | 25 | - | - | - | 25 | 51 | - | - | - | **100** |
| **Other activities (not directly related to culture)** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other activities | 34 | 32 | 33 | 10 | - | - | 17 | - | - | 39 | **100** |

- indicates nil response in this sample.
* indicates less than 1%.

## 9.5 OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME

Apart from the creative and other cultural activities discussed above, we identify two other sources of revenue that contribute to an artist's total income. The first of these is other paid or unpaid work outside the arts and cultural sector, undertaken by 30 percent of the artists in our sample; this is work undertaken in addition to their arts and cultural activities in the last 12 months. As noted in Section 9.1 above, just under one-quarter of all artists who engage in non-cultural work are paid for this work (see Table 9.1). About one-third of those undertaking paid non-cultural activities are doing so on a full-time basis and another third on a part-time basis (see Table 9.4). While these are paid in full- or part-time salaries or wages, the rest do such work casually and are paid either in casual wages or on an hourly-rate basis. Almost half of these non-cultural jobs are within the government sector and just under 40 percent are within the third sector (Table 9.2).

The second other source of revenue relates to income that comes from outside work activities, such as financial support received from government benefits of various kinds, money received from a partner or other family members, or payment from community trust funds and so on. Only one in five artists (19 percent) does *not* receive any form of support from one or more of these non-work sources. Details are shown in Table 9.5. The main source of non-work income for Indigenous artists in the Central Desert/APY Lands region is government benefits. Just on 70 percent of all artists in the region receive some form of financial support through a government benefit program. A significant proportion of this group of recipients is comprised of pensioners and people with disability. This group includes those artists working under the CDP conditions. In addition, just under one in five artists (17 percent) received money from their family last year, although this is possibly an underestimate as it does not include transfers in kind.

**Table 9.5 Artists receiving support from other income sources in the last 12 months (percent of respondents)**

| | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| **Artists not receiving support from other income sources** | **25** | **19** |
| **Artists receiving support from other income sources*** | **107** | **81** |
| **Total** | **132** | **100** |
| **Other income sources** | | |
| Government benefits, such as unemployment or other benefits | 93 | 70 |
| Money received from family | 22 | 17 |
| Mining royalties (community trust) | 11 | 8 |
| Partner income | 10 | 7 |
| A loan from a financial institution | 3 | 3 |
| Park royalties | 3 | 2 |

* Multiple responses allowed.

The various government programs providing financial support for artists are detailed in Table 9.6. The main ones are the Disability Support Pension, the Age Pension and Unemployment Benefits, which together provide financial support to almost three in five artists in the region. We assume that the relatively high numbers receiving support for disability reflect, amongst other things, the prevalence of diabetes and other chronic health issues among the older Indigenous population in the region. Around ten percent of artists on government benefits receive a parenting payment and about half of that number are on a Work-for-the-Dole program with CDP activities. We note that the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme has not attracted any artists; the scheme probably requires a level of entrepreneurial and business skills found amongst few if any individual artists in the region.

**Table 9.6 Artists receiving government benefits in the last 12 months (percent of respondents)**

| | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| **Artists not receiving government benefits** | **39** | **30** |
| **Artists receiving government benefits*** | **93** | **70** |
| **Total** | **132** | **100** |
| **Government benefits** | | |
| Disability Support Pension | 27 | 20 |
| Age Pension | 24 | 18 |
| Unemployment benefits, such as Newstart or Youth Allowance | 23 | 18 |
| Parenting Payment | 14 | 10 |
| Work for the Dole with CDP activities | 7 | 5 |
| Carer payments | 4 | 3 |
| Work for the Dole without CDP activities | 3 | 2 |
| New Enterprise Incentive Scheme | - | - |
| Other | 1 | 1 |

* Multiple responses allowed.
- indicates nil response in this sample.

We noted above the relatively small number of artists who place reliance on receiving income from their family (17 percent). In fact, funds actually flow more often in the other direction – almost all artists support other people in one way or another, as shown in Table 9.7. Not surprisingly, the main beneficiaries of this income redistribution are members of the artist's close family including his or her children or grandchildren. These data reflect the demand sharing economy that typically characterises Indigenous communities in remote areas (Peterson 1993).

**Table 9.7 Artists providing financial support to others in the last 12 months (percent of respondents)**

| | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| **Artist not supporting others** | **3** | **3** |
| **Artist supporting others** | **89** | **97** |
| **Total** | **92** | **100** |
| **Recipients of artists' support*** | | |
| Artist's other close family (immediate) members | 64 | 48 |
| Artist's dependent children/ grandchildren | 39 | 30 |
| Artist's partner | 17 | 13 |
| Artist's other family members (outside of immediate family) | 15 | 11 |

* Multiple responses allowed.

## 9.6 THE MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME

Drawing together the various sources of income, we asked artists to identify which one of them provided the *main* source of income for them in the last 12 months. Table 9.8 shows responses to this question. About half of all artists (48 percent) nominated "other sources" as their principal revenue stream; by inference from data in earlier tables we can conclude that government benefits were the most significant item for the majority of these individuals. It seems likely that these other sources of income were identified so often because they are perceived as being more consistent, despite the fact that, as we shall see, they do not generate the largest component of income on average. Table 9.8 indicates that creative artistic activities were the main income source for almost three in ten artists (27 percent) and a further eight percent gained their principal income from other cultural work.

**Table 9.8 The main income source in the last 12 months as perceived by respondents (percent of respondents)**

| Income sources | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Income from creative artistic activities | 35 | 27 |
| Income from other cultural activities | 11 | 8 |
| Income from other activities (not directly related to culture) | 18 | 14 |
| Income from other sources | 63 | 48 |
| Don't know/can't say | 4 | 3 |
| **Total** | **131** | **100** |

## 9.7 MEAN AND MEDIAN INCOMES

The use of population surveys as a means of collecting data about the monetary amounts of people's incomes and expenditures faces particular difficulties. Such information is private and respondents are often sensitive about divulging details of their financial affairs. These considerations are just as relevant to Aboriginal people as they are to anyone else. Having said that, however, we can report that we received full cooperation in this regard from respondents to our survey; no-one refused to provide information about their incomes, and all did so to the extent that they could. This significant result is a testimony to the fact that we placed a great deal of stress on securing the confidence and trust of the artists we interviewed, as we have described in Section 4 above.

Nevertheless, despite such cooperation from interviewees, there remain serious constraints on deriving accurate income data in a survey such as this. Many of the respondents have low numeracy levels[16] and most do not keep accurate accounting records or do not lodge their tax returns every year. Many of the respondents also could not recall exactly how much they have received as income and when it might have been received, particularly as most receive income from a variety of sources. Moreover, monies paid to Indigenous artists could also be immediately shared with family members and others, so it is not clear how much of any payment actually accrues to the individual. In some cases, income is received on behalf of the family, for example in royalty payments through the Land Council.

In our survey, we were able to deal with these problems for the component of income derived from artistic work through the following avenues. For those visual artists whose creative income was managed more or less solely through an organisation, such as an art centre or gallery, we were able to collect accurate statistics directly from the organisation – of course we obtained the written permission of the artists to allow us to access their income data in this way. In regard to other types of artists, a number of them were paid as employees (e.g. film-makers, multimedia artists, arts administrators), so again their salaries could be determined.

For income from other cultural and non-cultural activities recollection was often hazy, particularly as there were generally multiple sources of income in varying amounts during any given period. In cases where the respondent received a reasonably consistent income through salary or wages (e.g. as a ranger, arts worker, teacher, administrator) more precision was possible. Sitting fees and fees for consulting services were particularly hard to determine. Other sources of income (non-work) were also difficult to pin down; not all respondents were able to provide figures and these data need to be treated with caution. In most cases where Government benefits were received, the amounts could be estimated from the standard payment rates for the different benefit types subject to respondent's circumstances, such as whether or not they had dependent children, the respondent's age, their disability status and so on. These amounts are approximations only, because our survey does not give data on details that would be needed for determining more accurate estimates, such as arrangements with partners, number and the age of dependent children, and so on. We also did not have clear information on the continuity of these Government payments in individual cases, such as whether respondents received these payments throughout the entire 12 months or whether there had been any subtractions due to CDP penalties. We therefore had no alternative but to make an assumption that all respondents who received Government benefits received them for the entire 12 months. This means that some

[16] For data on competency levels derived from a survey of a small sample of Indigenous arts workers carried out for Desart in 2014, see Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (2014); see also Wright (2000).

overestimations are possible in these data. In the case of other sources such as income from a partner or money received from family, these receipts were likely to be irregular, such that respondents had difficulty nominating the total amount they would have received last year. In all cases it was not possible to obtain precise dollar figures; rather, we asked respondents to choose the range within which their income fell. In compiling tables from these data, we assume the point estimate to be the mid-point of the range.

Bearing all the above issues in mind, we present in Table 9.9 the mean and median incomes of artists in the Central Desert/APY Lands region for the last 12 months. The table shows the means/medians calculated across all artists in the sample, including zero incomes wherever relevant, but not including cases where income information was incomplete or uncertain.

Table 9.9 shows that creative activities produce just over one-third (35 percent) of a typical or average artist's total income, and more than half (56 percent) of their income from work. About 20 percent of total income comes from other work outside the cultural sector. We note that 38 percent of total income is derived from other sources, primarily government benefits as discussed above. The income from creative activities and total income as shown in Table 9.9 can be compared with the corresponding data for all Australian artists; the report *Making Art Work* shows that practising professional artists in Australia earned $18,800 on average in 2014–15 from their creative work, with total incomes of $48,400.

**Table 9.9 Mean and median incomes for artists in the last 12 months ($'000 p.a.)**

| Income sources (n=96) | Mean | Median |
|---|---|---|
| | $'000 p.a. | |
| Income from creative artistic activities | 10.7 | 3.0 |
| Income from other cultural activities | 2.8 | 0.0 |
| Income from other activities (not directly related to culture) | 5.1 | 0.0 |
| **Total income from work** | **18.7** | **10.5** |
| Income from other sources | 10.5 | 12.5 |
| **Total income** | **29.1** | **23.8** |

Nevertheless, it appears that artists in the Central Desert/APY Lands region may be better off on average than the rest of the Indigenous workforce in the region. Because our data show that the majority of Indigenous practising artists in the region are not in the labour force, we make two comparisons of these artists' incomes: (1) against incomes of Indigenous adults (15 years old and older) in general; and (2) against incomes of Indigenous adults who are in the labour force. Our estimate of the median annual income of artists in the region of around $23.8 thousand per annum is significantly higher than the median personal income for Indigenous (15+) people in the region (about $11.7 thousand p.a.) derived from 2016 ABS Census data. This median income of artists is also higher than the median personal income of Indigenous people in the labour force (about $18.2 thousands p.a.)[17] Given the regional context and the realities of working remotely, this comparison reinforces our proposition that working in the arts and cultural sector can provide an important means toward economic improvement for Indigenous people in the Central Desert/APY Lands region.

[17] Derived from estimates of weekly personal incomes for Indigenous persons (15 +) in general and in the labour force in Very Remote SA and Remote and Very Remote NT from the 2016 Census.

Finally, we show in Figure 9.2 the income distributions within the main income categories. These diagrams illustrate the observations concerning the various income sources that we have discussed in this section. We note particularly that in the case of income from creative activities, Figure 9.2 shows that the largest group of artists (38 percent) consists of those who earned between $1,000 and $10,000 last year. It is also noteworthy that 30 percent of artists in the region earned less than $1,000 last year from their creative work.

**Figure 9.2 Income distribution from different sources (percent of respondents who receive income from these sources)**

## 10. PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

In this section, we consider a range of issues affecting the art practice of individual cultural producers in the Central Desert/APY Lands region. In presenting the results, we distinguish between those artists who are primarily visual artists (activities including painting, print-making, weaving, carving, sculpting and so on) and those who are performing artists (engaged in music, dance, theatre, or film production). The issues covered include the location of work, preferences for spending more or less time at creative activity, professional experiences, copyright and use of technology in art practice.

### 10.1 ARTISTS' YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Table 10.1 shows the years of experience that artists in the region have had in their professional practice. The fact that more than half of the artists have had in excess of 20 years of experience practising their art reflects both the age distribution of the artist population in the region, and the early age from which artists learn and practice their art. It also attests to the significant accumulation of human capital in the Central Desert/APY Lands that comprises a major resource contributing to the generation of economic benefit for communities in the region.

**Table 10.1 Artists' years of experience (percent of artists)**

| Years of experience | Visual artists (n=93) % | Performing artists (n=34) % | All artists (n=132) % |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1-2 years | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| 3-5 years | 5 | - | 4 |
| 6-10 years | 9 | 12 | 10 |
| 11-20 years | 17 | 31 | 20 |
| 20+ years | 64 | 51 | 60 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

- indicates nil response in this sample.

### 10.2 LOCATIONS AND FACILITIES FOR MAKING WORK

All artists need somewhere to work. Sometimes art production in remote regions happens in a dedicated space such as at an art centre or in a music studio. At other times, artists may work at home or in the home of another family member or use a community facility. Some artists work on country. Table 10.2 lists the places used for art practice and shows the proportions of artists who use the spaces for some or all of their art production. The table also shows the single place that artists nominate as the location that is most important for their creative work.

Not surprisingly, the data show significant differences between practice of the visual and performing arts. For painters, print-makers and other visual artists, an art centre typically provides a place to work, a supply of materials such as canvas and paint, services such as mentorship and advice, and a marketing channel for the sale of work. For the majority of visual artists in the Central Desert/APY Lands region, the availability of access to an art centre is critical; the data show that 92 percent of them use an art centre at some time and

for 84 percent of them this is their most important work location. The other important place where these artists work is at home, especially if they do not have convenient access to an art centre or if they work full-time in other services in the community, and thus cannot come to the art centre during opening hours.

Performing artists such as musicians or dancers, on the other hand, often have no alternative other than to produce their music or practise at home, and for almost four in ten (38 percent) this is the most important location. Alternatively, a community facility such as a school or a men's shed can provide the space and possibly equipment for performance practice. Some musicians in the region are fortunate enough to be able to utilise a dedicated studio space, such as a recording studio, which may provide instruments, recording facilities and so on.

Community spaces and facilities are also utilised by artists in the region, including facilities provided by organisations whose core operations may not directly relate to local arts and culture. For example, the Santa Teresa Media Hub Community Development Program provides facilities, equipment and training opportunities for young filmmakers, musicians, animators and photographers, supported by Catholic Care NT.

The data in Table 10.2 highlight the importance of working on country for both visual and performing artists, not only for the purpose of collecting materials, but also as a place actually to make work. During interviews, many visual and performing artists mentioned the importance of being on country as a source of inspiration for their work; for example, some musicians pointed to sounds such as birdsong heard out bush that can be used in their compositions. However, country is also a place of practice – painting on country and rehearsing on country are not uncommon.

**Table 10.2 Places used for artistic practice by artists (percent of artists)**

| Place of artistic practice | Location used for producing art* | | | Location where most time for art production is spent | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Visual artists (n=93) | Performing artists (n=34) | All artists (n=132) | Visual artists (n=93) | Performing artists (n=34) | All artists (n=132) |
| | % | | | % | | |
| Art centre | 92 | 6 | 67 | 84 | - | 60 |
| Home or family member's home | 41 | 97 | 55 | 13 | 38 | 19 |
| Community space or facility | 8 | 71 | 25 | 2 | 29 | 10 |
| Dedicated studio space, such as artist studio, recording studio or editing suite | 4 | 53 | 19 | 1 | 22 | 7 |
| On country | 18 | 53 | 29 | - | 8 | 3 |
| Educational institution (such as school, TAFE, etc.) | 8 | 41 | 16 | - | 3 | 1 |
| **Total** | | | | **100** | **100** | **100** |

* Multiple responses allowed.

- indicates nil response in this sample.

### 10.3 PREFERENCES OVER TIME ALLOCATION

One avenue for increased art and cultural production in the Central Desert/APY Lands region could be for artists to spend more of their time at art work. In the survey, we asked respondents whether they would like to spend more, less, or about the same amount of time at their art practice. The responses indicate that exactly half are happy with the status quo, while just over four in ten (43 percent) would like to spend more time at art work; only five percent stated they would like to spend less time on their artistic activities, with the rest being unsure if they wanted to spend more or less time. The main reason why those artists who would like to allocate more of their time to their art do not do so relates back to their family responsibilities, as seen in Table 10.3. Likewise, the need to spend time at work not connected to their art practice affects about a quarter (26 percent) of artists, and is the most serious constraint for 16 percent of artists willing to do more. These limitations on creative time are similar to those identified by all Australian artists when asked this question.

A number of other obstacles to undertaking more creative art work are shown in Table 10.3. The fact that 15 percent of artists in our survey nominated health issues as the main reason for not undertaking more artistic work is a worrying reminder of the poor state of Indigenous health in remote Australia. It can also be noted that 10 percent of artists who would like to work more identified difficulties in promoting their work or getting their work to market as the most important constraint on their willingness to work more. An increased effort to expand market opportunities for art from remote areas is needed to address this problem.

**Table 10.3 Reasons for not being able to spend more time at art work (percent of those respondents who would prefer to spend more time on their artistic activities)**

| Reasons (n=53) | Reasons* | | The main reason | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % |
| Family issues | 14 | 26 | 13 | 25 |
| Too much non-arts work that I have responsibilities for | 14 | 26 | 8 | 16 |
| Health issues | 10 | 19 | 8 | 15 |
| Difficulties with promoting my work/ getting my work to market | 7 | 13 | 6 | 10 |
| Balancing my work with community or cultural responsibilities | 8 | 15 | 3 | 5 |
| Little income from this work/need to earn more income elsewhere | 5 | 9 | 2 | 4 |
| No time because have to fulfil requirements in order to receive government benefits | 4 | 8 | 2 | 4 |
| New thing, just starting it out | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Lack of skills/ experience | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Lack of materials | 3 | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| Lack of equipment | 3 | 6 | - | - |
| Lack of facilities | 2 | 4 | - | - |
| Lack of access to country | - | - | - | - |
| Other | 11 | 21 | 7 | 14 |
| Don't know/ Not sure | 2 | 4 | - | - |
| **Total** | | | **53** | **100** |

* Multiple response allowed.

- indicates nil response in this sample.

### 10.4 PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

The work of artists practising in remote and very remote areas of Australia can gain recognition beyond the region and can extend internationally in some cases. In the survey, respondents were asked whether their work had been showcased in capital cities or overseas. The responses indicate that almost two-thirds (64 percent) of artists in the Central Desert/APY Lands region have had their work shown or presented in capital cities, and one in three (29 percent) have been seen overseas. Much of this exposure is due to the fact that most regional art centres and organisations have connections with agents and galleries in the capital cities in Australia and abroad – one example is the recent opening of a dedicated gallery space in Sydney for APY Lands artists by the APY Lands Artists Collective.

Our data on interstate and overseas exposure may understate the true proportions, as some visual artists, for example, may not be aware of the fact that a work of theirs sold through an art centre or by a gallery may finish up in the collection of a buyer in another State or country, or may have ended up in a secondary sale overseas.

Another form of recognition that artists can enjoy is winning an art award or prize or receiving a grant or funding to continue artistic work. There are several prize competitions for Indigenous art in Australia, the most prominent of which is the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award,[18] held every year with a major exhibition in Darwin. Our data show that one-third (32 percent) of artists in the Central Desert/APY Lands region have won an award or prize of some sort. A smaller proportion of artists (10 percent) have received a grant or similar funding for their art work, although a large number have probably benefited indirectly from such funding when the art centre in which they work receives financial support in the form of a grant from an external donor or funding body.

When asked about the effects of any of the above experiences on their practice, artists were almost uniformly positive. Of those whose work has been showcased overseas or in capital cities, between 85 and 91 percent regarded this experience as having been positive. Likewise, 94 percent of those winning a prize or receiving a grant reported these successes as having a positive effect on their art practice.

Note that virtually all of the cultural producers in our survey who are engaged in visual arts have their practice managed by an arts centre. The great majority of them regard this as positive, with 75 percent indicating a very positive attitude and a further 17 percent saying they were fairly positive. A small number of artists (fewer than 10 percent) are managed by a private company (primarily musicians); while four in five of them (81 percent) regard this as very positive, the remainder hold a negative opinion of their experience with this arrangement. However, sample numbers are too small to allow generalisation of this result.

### 10.5 USE OF EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

Depending on their mode of practice, artists may use a range of different types of equipment or technologies in the production of their art. In the case of equipment, for example, musicians use sound systems, recording devices and so on, whilst social media provide a wide variety of platforms, software and other technologies that artists can utilise. Data on the use of a range of equipment and technologies by artists in the Central Desert/ APY Lands region are shown in Table 10.4.

[18] Known as the "Telstras". Telstra has been the major sponsor of the awards since the early 1990s.

**Table 10.4 Artists' use of equipment and technology (percent of artists)**

| Equipment and technology | Visual artists (n=93) | Performing artists (n=34) | All artists (n=131) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | % | | |
| **Use some of these:*** | **23** | **85** | **41** |
| Mobile or smart phones (for example, for photo, video or sound recording) | 14 | 53 | 25 |
| Sound recording or playing equipment | 4 | 65 | 21 |
| Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or others | 6 | 50 | 19 |
| Desktop computer, laptop computer, iPad, etc. | 6 | 41 | 17 |
| Third-party websites, such as YouTube, Vimeo or others | 5 | 26 | 11 |
| Video or film equipment | 3 | 18 | 9 |
| Still photography camera | 5 | 15 | 8 |
| Personal website | - | - | - |
| Other | - | - | - |
| **Do not use any of these** | **77** | **15** | **59** |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **100** |

* Multiple responses allowed.
- indicates nil response in this sample.

Not surprisingly, there are sharp differences between visual and performing artists in their use of these technical and technological resources. We note that more than three-quarters of visual artists (77 percent) do not use any of the devices listed, whilst the great majority of performing artists (85 percent) use one or more of them. Among the latter artists the most frequently occurring usage is for sound recording and playing equipment, with more than half of these artists using one or more of these. Despite artists' various engagements with modernity in operating their practice, no one in our sample used a personal website to promote their work, a practice that is widespread in the rest of the Australian population of professional artists[19]. Despite a relatively low use of technology by Indigenous artists in the remote regional areas, it is important to note that overall Indigenous artists use technology more than the Indigenous population in general. Analysis of the 2014-15 NATSISS data shows that Australia-wide, Indigenous artists in very remote and remote areas access the internet more often than the general Indigenous population in these areas – 73 percent compared to 64 percent for very remote areas, and 56 percent compared to 50 percent for remote areas.

[19] See *Making Art Work* 2017, p.119.

### 10.6 COPYRIGHT ISSUES

Most artists in our survey were aware, in general terms, of the existence of copyright when questioned -- an awareness attributable to active campaigns promoting copyright undertaken by peak bodies, art centres and other agencies in the region, and no doubt stimulated by current publicity surrounding the unauthorised use of actual or fake Indigenous designs in souvenirs sold to tourists in some major centres. Respondents were asked whether, as far as they were aware, their work or a reproduction of their work had been used without their permission or payment. The great majority (92 percent) said no, although it was acknowledged that plagiarism, copying or other infringement could at times occur without the artist ever being able to find out. Of the very small number whose copyright had been infringed at some time, most had taken successful action to stop infringement or to seek compensation.

The fact that copyright infringement does not appear to be a serious problem for artists in the survey region should not be taken as a reason for letting up on efforts more generally to strengthen measures for protection of Indigenous intellectual property. Sometimes publishers and writers expect artists to waive their licensing fees in order to publish a book or an article in which the artist's work is shown. Some public galleries will reproduce a work in their collection without notifying the artist or paying the appropriate fee. In such cases artists do not earn the licensing fees or royalties to which they are entitled.

To their credit most art centres, and most galleries dedicated to Indigenous art, appear to take a responsible attitude and exercise due care in regard to copyright protection for artists. However, constant vigilance is needed, and the efficacy of legislation and other mechanisms to protect the rights of Indigenous artists needs to be kept under continuing review.

# 11. GENDER ISSUES

The position of women in Australian society in general and in the workforce in particular has been coming under increasing scrutiny in contemporary times. The issues being raised are just as important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women as for any other group. It is appropriate, therefore, that this study should take a closer look at the similarities and differences in the circumstances of female and male artists in the survey region. We do so in this section, comparing where possible the data for the Central Desert/APY Lands artists with statistics for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults residing in remote and very remote areas Australia-wide, and for all Australian artists as shown in *Making Art Work* 2017.

## 11.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

The female/male gender ratio in the survey region is roughly 60/40. Some demographic characteristics of the female and male artist population in the region are shown in Table 11.1. It appears that female artists on average are significantly older their male colleagues. There are two other characteristics that stand out in comparisons between the genders. The first is the artists' family circumstances. As the table shows, a very large proportion of female Indigenous artists in remote and very remote areas of the Central Desert and APY Lands (40 percent) are single mothers or caring for dependent children without support from a partner. Only two percent of males fall into this category. It appears that single mothers in the region are particularly likely to turn to arts and culture, perhaps because of the flexibility that such activities provide.

**Table 11.1 Demographic characteristics of artists, by gender (percent of respondents)**

| | Female (n=81) | Male (n=51) |
|---|---|---|
| **Age (years)** | | |
| Mean age | 55 | 41 |
| Median age | 60 | 40 |
| **Family circumstances (%)** | | |
| Single no children | 23 | 32 |
| Single with children | 40 | 2 |
| Partner no children | 6 | 13 |
| Partner with children | 31 | 53 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

The second demographic characteristic that stands out is shown in Table 11.2 – the occurrence of disability, long-term illness or other impairment that affects the capacities of artists in the survey region. The table indicates that in the region there are more women with disability than there are men (54 percent compared to 23 percent).

**Table 11.2 Disability, long-term illness or other impairment, by gender (percent of respondents)**

| Disability/ long-term illness/ other impairment | Female (n=81) | Male (n=51) |
|---|---|---|
| | % | |
| Yes | 54 | 23 |
| No | 46 | 77 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

## 11.2 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

How do female and male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists in remote areas compare in terms of their levels of formal education, and are there any differences between men and women when learning about their culture or acquiring their industry training skills to work in the arts?

The highest levels of formal education received, the pathways for acquiring cultural knowledge, and the pathways for gaining industry skills are shown by gender in Tables 11.3, 11.4, and 11.5 respectively. There are few differences between men and women among artists in the region in their formal educational attainment; although it appears that more women than men proceed to obtain a post-school qualification, the sample sizes here are too small to enable a firm conclusion to be drawn. Nevertheless, these results reflect an Australia-wide pattern, since female artists in general tend to spend more years in training and education than their male colleagues.[20] Noticeable differences do appear in the data for the most important pathway for acquiring cultural knowledge. Table 11.4 shows that although both men and women mostly learn about their culture from family members, this pathway is much more significant among female than among male artists (85 percent compared to 60 percent). Men by contrast are more likely than women to learn from friends or other community members, from being on country, and from participating in ceremonies.

Likewise, we find gender differences in the way artists gain their skills and experience. Again, although both women and men identify acquiring these skills by learning from a family member as the most important pathway, it is a more significant mode of learning for women than men (58 percent compared to 37 percent). This observed relativity is true for both forms of learning from a family member – observation or active participation. Table 11.5 shows that a significantly higher proportion of female artists (26 percent) than male artists (14 percent) stated that observation without participation was their main way of learning industry skills. During the survey interviews a number of artists described instances when some younger female artists were not allowed to participate, yet were not precluded from watching senior artists work.

[20] *Making Art Work* 2017, p. 125.

**Table 11.3 Highest level of formal education, by gender (percent of respondents) ^**

| | Never attended | Year 10 (or equivalent) and below | Year 11 and Year 12 (or equivalent) | Completed Diploma or Certificate | Completed Bachelor's Degree | Completed Postgraduate Degree, Diploma or Certificate or Doctorate Degree | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | % | | | |
| **Indigenous artists residing in remote and very remote areas in the Central Desert and APY Lands** | | | | | | | |
| Female | 1 | 52 | 33 | 13 | 3 | - | **100** |
| Male | - | 58 | 35 | 3 | 3 | - | **100** |
| **Indigenous adults residing in remote and very remote areas Australia-wide**** | | | | | | | |
| Female | 2 | 49 | 26 | 21 | 1 | 1 | **100** |
| Male | 2 | 52 | 23 | 22 | - | 1 | **100** |
| **All artists Australia-wide***** | | | | | | | |
| Female | * | 1 | 5 | 11 | 37 | 46 | **100** |
| Male | * | 3 | 11 | 16 | 32 | 38 | **100** |

^ Excluded "Don't know/ Not sure" responses.
* indicates less than 1%.
** NATSISS 2014-15.
*** Artists' Survey 2017.
- indicates nil response in this sample.

**Table 11.4 Most important pathway for acquiring cultural knowledge, by gender (percent of respondents)**

| Cultural knowledge pathways | Female (n=81) | Male (n=51) |
|---|---|---|
| | % | |
| Directly from family members | 85 | 66 |
| Directly from elders and/ or other community members | 12 | 20 |
| From being on country | * | 11 |
| From participating in ceremonies | * | 3 |
| From artworks, songs or stories | * | - |
| From festivals or other cultural events | - | - |
| Some other way | - | - |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

- indicates nil response in this sample.
* indicates less than 1%.

**Table 11.5 Important and 'most important' pathways for gaining industry skills and experience, by gender (percent of respondents)**

| Industry skills pathways | Female (n=81) | | Male (n=51) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pathways** | Most important pathway | Pathways** | Most important pathway |
| | % | | | |
| Learning from a family member: | 74 | 58 | 67 | 37 |
| Observing and participating with a family member | 50 | 32 | 37 | 23 |
| Observing from a family member | 45 | 26 | 36 | 14 |
| Learning from a friend or community member: | 43 | 13 | 51 | 17 |
| Observing and participating with a friend or community member | 22 | 7 | 38 | 9 |
| Observing from a friend or community member | 28 | 6 | 18 | 8 |
| Self-learning | 40 | 13 | 62 | 12 |
| School | 39 | 6 | 49 | 12 |
| Mentorship with an art professional | 21 | 4 | 22 | 15 |
| Learning on the job | 16 | 2 | 26 | - |
| University program | * | - | 9 | 3 |
| Workshops/ short courses | 49 | * | 33 | - |
| Vocational training | 5 | - | 7 | - |
| Online sources | 1 | - | 12 | - |
| Some other way | 5 | 2 | 15 | 3 |
| **Total** | | **100** | | **100** |

- indicates nil response in this sample.
* indicates less than 1%.
** Multiple responses allowed.

## 11.3 TIME ALLOCATION

Time spent on cultural-economic activities by female and male artists is shown in Table 11.6, summarised as the weighted average score for each activity. The gender differences among the creative art activities reflect the occupational split between men and women artists in the region, with more men than women engaged in music, writing, film-making and multimedia work. We note, for example, that women engaged in the performing arts spend on average less than one day per month at this activity, whereas men spend up to two or three days per week on average. Across the other cultural activities there are few gender differences, although the data confirm that men spend more time involved in ceremonies than women on average.

Data on the number of hours in the average week that artists allocate to various activities are shown in Table 11.7. It appears that men spend more hours per week at all the types of activities shown.

**Table 11.6 Time spent on cultural-economic activities, by gender (weighted average score)**

| Activities | Female | Male |
|---|---|---|
| | Weighted average score* | |
| **Creative artistic activities** | | |
| Visual arts | 4.3 | 4.3 |
| Performing arts | 1.8 | 3.6 |
| Writing/ storytelling | 1.3 | 2.1 |
| Composing/ choreographing | 2.0 | 2.7 |
| Film-making/ multimedia work | 2.7 | 3.3 |
| **Other cultural activities** | | |
| Teaching others in arts and culture | 2.6 | 2.6 |
| Caring for country | 1.8 | 1.9 |
| Being on a cultural board, committee or council | 1.5 | 1.7 |
| Interpreting, translating and/or cross-cultural consulting | 2.1 | 2.1 |
| Making Indigenous medicines or cosmetics or providing Indigenous health services | 1.6 | 1.8 |
| Fishing, hunting, collecting or preparing bush food | 2.1 | 2.4 |
| Participating in ceremonies | 1.3 | 2.0 |
| Providing cultural tourism services | 1.7 | 1.3 |
| Arts administration | 3.2 | 3.4 |
| Arts management | 3.0 | 3.1 |
| Cultural archiving, record keeping | 1.3 | 1.0 |

** 1 indicates “few full days/year”; 2 indicates “1-2 full days/month”; 3 indicates “1 full day/week”; 4 indicates “2-3 full days/week”; 5 indicates “4-5 full days/week”. Excludes “Don't know/ Not sure” responses.

**Table 11.7 Mean and median number of hours that artists spent on activities in the last 12 months, by gender (hours)**

| Hours spent on… | Female (n=81) | | Male (n=49) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | Median | Mean | Median |
| | hours | | | |
| Creative artistic activities | 25 | 32 | 28 | 32 |
| Other cultural activities | 14 | 13 | 18 | 13 |
| **Total arts and cultural activities** | **39** | **38** | **46** | **40** |
| Other activities (not directly related to culture) | 4 | 0 | 9 | 0 |
| **Total working hours** | **42** | **39** | **55** | **53** |

* Excluding outliers.

### 11.4 FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The current gender full-time pay gap is 14 percent across the Australian workforce, with Australian women earning $240 per week less than men on average[21]. In 2015, the pay gap for Australian artists was significantly larger, with women earning 30 percent less than men for their creative work[22]. It is therefore important to ascertain whether a similar financial disadvantage applies to women artists in the Central Desert/APY Lands region.

Firstly, we can identify the main income sources for male and female artists as revealed in the survey. Table 11.8 shows the proportions of artists who nominated each source as their single main revenue source. It is apparent that "other sources" is the most prominent category of income for both genders, reflecting the importance of government benefits and other non-work-related income as a source of income support for artists, as discussed earlier in this Report. However, it is also clear that these other sources of income are nominated by significantly more women than men (57 percent compared to 33 percent). It can be inferred that this result reflects the greater prevalence of single parenting and disability among female artists that we have noted, as well as the age differential, both of which lead to females placing a greater reliance on disability support and other pensions than is the case for males.

**Table 11.8 The main source of income, by gender (percent of respondents)**

| Main income comes from | Female | Male |
|---|---|---|
| Creative artistic activities | 25 | 29 |
| Other cultural activities | 6 | 12 |
| Other work | 9 | 21 |
| Other sources | 57 | 33 |
| Don't know/ Not sure | 3 | 5 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

Turning to income levels, we show in Table 11.9 the mean and median incomes from different types of work for male and female artists in the Central Desert/APY Lands region. There are only minor differences between the genders in the levels of work income, such that the mean total incomes from work are not significantly different. However, we note that women's income from other sources is about twice that of their male counterparts, reflecting again the issues raised in our earlier discussion. As a result, on average the total incomes from all sources for female artists in the region are somewhat greater than for male artists. We conclude that the financial disadvantage that is so pervasive for women in mainstream Australia does not appear to extend to artists in this region.

[21] Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2019) *Australia's Gender Pay Gap Statistics*. February 2019.
[22] *Making Art Work* 2017, p. 131.

**Table 11.9 Mean and median incomes for artists in the last 12 months, by gender ($'000 p.a.)**

| Income sources | Female (n=57) | | Male (n=39) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | Median | Mean | Median |
| | $'000 p.a. | | $'000 p.a. | |
| Income from creative artistic activities | 11.5 | 3.0 | 9.6 | 3.0 |
| Income from other cultural activities | 2.5 | 0.0 | 3.2 | 0.0 |
| Income from other activities (not directly related to culture) | 3.8 | 0.0 | 7.0 | 0.0 |
| **Total income from work** | **17.9** | **8.0** | **19.8** | **12.5** |
| Income from other sources | 13.2 | 12.5 | 6.5 | 0.5 |
| **Total income** | **31.1** | **25.5** | **26.3** | **20.5** |

## 12. STATE/TERRITORY DIFFERENCES

The region covered by this survey falls partly in the Northern Territory (the Central Desert) and partly in South Australia (the APY Lands). As well as coming under two State/Territory administrations, these two areas differ in a number of respects: their cultural backgrounds and composition, their geography, their land use, their pattern of settlement, and the size of their economies[23] – we have alluded to some of these differences already in this Report. In this section, we tabulate some of the main results from the survey broken down into SA and NT components, in order to assess whether any differences between the two regions may have some effect on any of the major variables under study in a way that might have implications for policy formation in the two State/Territory jurisdictions.

### 12.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

Some demographic characteristics of artists in the two State/Territory regions are shown in Table 12.1. The female/male gender ratio among artists is approximately 70/30 in the SA component of the survey region, and approximately 60/40 in the NT component.[24] There are no significant differences in the mean ages of artists in the two areas. In regard to family circumstances, there are substantial variations observable in the data – these reflect particularly the situation of women artists who are single and with dependent children, as discussed in Section 11.1 above. There appears to be a greater incidence of disability amongst artists in the Central Desert than in the APY Lands.

**Table 12.1 Demographic characteristics of artists, by State/Territory (percent of all respondents)**

| | APY Lands SA (n=55) | Central Desert NT (n=76) |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | |
| Female | 69 | 57 |
| Male | 31 | 43 |
| **Age (years)** | | |
| Mean age | 53 | 47 |
| Median age | 50 | 50 |
| **Family circumstances (%)** | | |
| Single no children | 14 | 35 |
| Single with children | 39 | 15 |
| Partner no children | 3 | 12 |
| Partner with children | 43 | 37 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |
| Living with disability, long-term illness (%) | 37 | 45 |

[23] There may also be differences in policy impacts – for example, the fact that NT was subject to the intervention, whereas SA was not.
[24] Based on NATSISS data.

## 12.2 CULTURAL ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

Table 12.2 shows the range of cultural-economic activities that artists in the Central Desert and the APY Lands have ever done, are currently doing, and for which they are currently being paid, with percentages calculated across all artists in the sample. Table 12.3 shows the proportions of artists in the two jurisdictions who are currently engaged in activities, calculated as percentages of those with experience in the various activities. Of those artists who are currently engaged in activities, the proportions currently being paid are shown in Table 12.4.

**Table 12.2 Cultural-economic activities undertaken by artists, by State/Territory (percent of all respondents)**

| Activities* | Ever done | | Currently doing** | | Currently being paid** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | APY Lands | Central Desert | APY Lands | Central Desert | APY Lands | Central Desert |
| | % | | | | | |
| **Creative artistic activities** | | | | | | |
| Visual arts | 88 | 86 | 84 | 72 | 80 | 67 |
| Performing arts | 61 | 66 | 39 | 55 | 20 | 35 |
| Composing/ choreographing | 9 | 32 | 7 | 21 | 0 | 10 |
| Writing/ storytelling | n/a | 48 | n/a | 28 | n/a | 13 |
| Film-making/ multimedia work | n/a | 28 | n/a | 13 | n/a | 6 |
| **Other cultural activities** | | | | | | |
| Teaching others in arts and culture | 73 | 81 | 58 | 68 | 48 | 30 |
| Caring for country | 85 | 91 | 67 | 70 | 20 | 27 |
| Being on a cultural board, committee or council | 38 | 38 | 25 | 31 | 16 | 18 |
| Interpreting, translating or cross-cultural consulting | 24 | 59 | 16 | 37 | 13 | 20 |
| Making Indigenous medicines or cosmetics or providing Indigenous health services | 59 | 70 | 42 | 43 | 17 | 11 |
| Fishing, hunting, collecting or preparing bush food | 70 | 91 | 58 | 77 | 16 | 10 |
| Participating in ceremonies | 45 | 85 | 27 | 55 | 12 | 11 |
| Providing cultural tourism services | 12 | 46 | 9 | 17 | 5 | 13 |
| Arts administration | 9 | 20 | 7 | 10 | 7 | 9 |
| Arts management | n/a | 14 | n/a | 8 | n/a | 5 |
| Cultural archiving, record keeping | n/a | 19 | n/a | 6 | n/a | 4 |

n/a indicates insufficient sample.

* Multiple responses allowed.

** In the last 12 months.

**Table. 12.3 Proportions of artists with experience in activities currently engaged in those activities, by State/Territory (percent of those with previous experience)**

| Activities | South Australia | Northern Territory |
|---|---|---|
| | % | |
| **Creative artistic activities** | | |
| Visual arts | 96 | 84 |
| Performing arts | 64 | 84 |
| Composing/ choreographing | n/a | 67 |
| Writing/ storytelling | n/a | 59 |
| Film-making/ multimedia work | n/a | 46 |
| **Other cultural activities** | | |
| Teaching others in arts and culture | 80 | 84 |
| Caring for country | 78 | 77 |
| Being on a cultural board, committee or council | 67 | 80 |
| Interpreting, translating or cross-cultural consulting | 69 | 64 |
| Making Indigenous medicines or cosmetics or providing Indigenous health services | 72 | 62 |
| Fishing, hunting, collecting or preparing bush food | 82 | 84 |
| Participating in ceremonies | 59 | 65 |
| Providing cultural tourism services | 70 | 37 |
| Arts administration | n/a | 51 |
| Arts management | n/a | 57 |
| Cultural archiving, record keeping | n/a | 31 |

n/a indicates nil response in this sample.

In regard to creative arts activities, there is a stronger presence in music composition, film-making and multimedia work in the NT component of the region, reflecting differences in availability of facilities as noted earlier in this Report. In the case of other cultural activities, there are some noticeable differences between SA and NT data. For example, there appears to be a greater involvement in ceremonies amongst Central Desert artists. There is also a greater involvement across the board in the NT in artists' engagement with other cultural activities such as translating, interpreting, cultural archiving, providing services to tourists, and arts administration and management; this result is evidently due to the fact that more opportunities are available to NT artists to become involved in these activities than is the case for their SA counterparts, although when the latter artists do participate in these activities, a larger proportion of them appear to be paid.

Looking at the number of activities that artists have ever done, are currently doing, and are currently being paid for, as shown in Table 12.5, we can see that the involvement of NT artists in cultural-economic activities has been somewhat more extensive than that of the SA artists in our sample. This is true for both creative and other cultural activities, and for both past experience and current practice.

**Table 12.4 Proportions of artists paid per activity in the last 12 months, by State/Territory (percent of those who engaged in activity in the last 12 months)**

| Activities | South Australia | Northern Territory |
|---|---|---|
| | % | |
| **Creative artistic activities** | | |
| Visual arts | 96 | 93 |
| Performing arts | 50 | 64 |
| Composing/ choreographing | n/a | 47 |
| Writing/ storytelling | n/a | 47 |
| Film-making/ multimedia work | n/a | 48 |
| **Other cultural activities** | | |
| Teaching others in arts and culture | 82 | 45 |
| Caring for country | 30 | 39 |
| Being on a cultural board, committee or council | 64 | 60 |
| Interpreting, translating or cross-cultural consulting | 77 | 54 |
| Making Indigenous medicines or cosmetics or providing Indigenous health services | 39 | 26 |
| Fishing, hunting, collecting or preparing bush food | 28 | 13 |
| Participating in ceremonies | 46 | 20 |
| Providing cultural tourism services | n/a | 78 |
| Arts administration | n/a | 90 |
| Arts management | n/a | 62 |
| Cultural archiving, record keeping | n/a | 67 |

n/a indicates nil response in this sample.

**Table 12.5 Average number of cultural-economic activities undertaken by artists, by State/Territory (number of activities)**

| Activities | Ever done | | Currently doing | | Currently paid | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | APY Lands | Central Desert | APY Lands | Central Desert | APY Lands | Central Desert |
| | no. of activities | | no. of activities | | no. of activities | |
| Creative artistic | 1.7 | 2.6 | 1.4 | 1.9 | 1.1 | 1.4 |
| Other cultural | 4.2 | 6.1 | 3.7 | 5.3 | 1.7 | 1.6 |
| **All arts & cultural** | **5.9** | **8.7** | **5.0** | **7.2** | **2.8** | **3.0** |

Overall, differences between the two State/Territory jurisdictions in all of the data discussed above on the engagement of artists in cultural-economic activities point to a somewhat more diversified art economy in the Central Desert than currently exists in the APY Lands. In particular, since the region in NT takes in both Alice Springs and the town of Yulara, there are more galleries, art centres, media organisations and other supporting facilities in the NT component of the survey region, and the culture-related tourism industry is far more extensive.

### 12.3 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The pathways that artists in the NT and SA identify as having been the most important in the process of their acquiring their cultural capital are shown in Table 12.6 for the acquisition of their cultural knowledge, and in Table 12.7 for the ways in which they have gained the skills and competencies necessary to practise as an artist. The patterns and assessments of importance appear on the whole to be rather similar – as an explanation it can be argued that the basic means by which knowledge and skills are learned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are essentially the same for all, regardless of location. The minor variations that can be seen in our data in aspects such as the proportions of respondents learning from family members or elders/other community members can simply be attributed to the occurrence of different circumstances from time to time at the micro-level, rather than to any systematic differences between the regions.

**Table 12.6 Most important pathways for acquiring cultural knowledge, by State/Territory (percent of all respondents)**

| Cultural knowledge pathways | APY Lands SA (n=55) | Central Desert NT (n=76) |
|---|---|---|
| | % | |
| Directly from family members | 82 | 75 |
| Directly from elders and/ or other community members | 16 | 15 |
| From being on country | 2 | 7 |
| From participating in ceremonies | - | 2 |
| From artworks, songs or stories | - | 3 |
| From festivals or other cultural events | - | 1 |
| Some other way | - | - |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

- indicates nil response in this sample.

**Table 12.7 Most important pathways for gaining industry skills and experience, by State/Territory (percent of all respondents)**

| Industry skills pathways | APY Lands SA (n=55) | Central Desert NT (n=76) |
|---|---|---|
| | % | |
| Learning from a family member: | 46 | 54 |
| Participating with and observing from a family member | 20 | 35 |
| Only observing from a family member | 26 | 19 |
| Learning from a friend or community member: | 22 | 10 |
| Participating with and observing from a friend or community member | 4 | 9 |
| Only observing from a friend or community member | 18 | 1 |
| Self-learning | 14 | 11 |
| School | 5 | 10 |
| Mentorship with an art professional | 9 | 7 |
| Learning on the job | 2 | 1 |
| University program | - | 2 |
| Workshops/ short courses | - | 1 |
| Vocational training | - | - |
| Online sources | - | - |
| Some other way | 2 | 3 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

- indicates nil response in this sample.

## 12.4 FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The income sources that artists nominate as being the main one making up their annual income are shown for the Central Desert and APY Lands artists in Table 12.8. The mean and median incomes of artists for the main categories of income are shown in Table 12.9. There is not a great deal of difference between the two regions revealed in these data – indeed the average annual creative incomes of artists in the two areas are virtually identical. Nevertheless, the financial importance and level of returns from other cultural activities do show some differences. These activities provide the main source of income for a larger proportion of artists in the NT than in SA (ten percent compared with six percent), in line with observations we have made earlier about the relative availabilities of other cultural activities as an income source for artists in the two regions. On the other hand, income from non-cultural activities is the most important source for a larger proportion of SA than NT artists (16 versus 12 percent), although the average income received from this source is higher in the NT. Overall, earned incomes from work are the most important income sources for a larger proportion of artists in the Central Desert than in the APY Lands (52 percent compared with 44 percent), whereas the latter artists appear to place greater reliance on other (non-work) sources of financial support.

**Table 12.8 The main income source in the last 12 months as perceived by respondents, by State/Territory (percent of respondents)**

| Income sources | APY Lands SA (n=55) | Central Desert NT (n=76) |
|---|---|---|
| | % | |
| Income from creative artistic activities | 22 | 30 |
| Income from other cultural activities | 6 | 10 |
| Income from other activities (not directly related to culture) | 16 | 12 |
| Income from other sources | 53 | 45 |
| Don't know/can't say | 4 | 4 |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** |

**Table 12.9 Mean and median incomes for artists in the last 12 months, by State/Territory ($'000 p.a.)**

| Income sources | APY Lands SA (n=37) | | Central Desert NT (n=59) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | Median | Mean | Median |
| | $'000 p.a. | | $'000 p.a. | |
| Income from creative artistic activities | 11.0 | 3.0 | 10.5 | 3.0 |
| Income from other cultural activities | 1.5 | 0 | 3.7 | 0 |
| Income from other activities (not directly related to culture) | 3.8 | 0 | 6.0 | 0 |
| **Total income from work** | **16.3** | **7.5** | **20.2** | **10.5** |
| Income from other sources | 10.4 | 12.5 | 10.5 | 12.5 |
| **Total income** | **26.7** | **21.0** | **30.7** | **30.0** |

## 13. ART AND CULTURE IN SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

One of the important purposes of this study has been to consider the extent to which art and cultural production has the potential to promote the long-term sustainability of remote communities in the Central Desert/APY Lands region. As a component of the survey, we presented respondents with a series of statements, both positive and negative, relating to this question and sought the extent of their agreement or disagreement with each statement. The following aspects were considered:

- views on the role of art and cultural production as a source of income and employment in respondents' communities;
- needs for skill development;
- infrastructure issues; and
- tourism as a source of economic benefit.

Details of the statements and of the responses for each one are shown in Table 13.1. The summary scores shown are calculated according to the scale shown beneath the table. Note that the order of the statements was randomised in presenting them to respondents in the interviews.

Turning first to artists' views on the role of art and culture in generating incomes and employment, we note that a significant majority of artists (84 percent) agreed with the proposition that artistic activities can indeed be a source of economic benefit. Similarly, a majority (78 percent) agreed that culture-related activities could also be beneficial. These attitudes extended to the long-term prospects for the role of art in community development, as can be seen in the table.

Secondly, there was almost unanimous agreement that "Artists/writers like myself can train young people in the community to become artists/writers", attesting to the importance of intergenerational cultural transmission in skill development that we have noted earlier in this Report. Respondents also endorsed the importance of bilingual education in school (94 percent of respondents); not only is this essential for the maintenance of Indigenous languages, the dual nature of such educational programs is seen to help young people in the community to get jobs and earn incomes later on. In a post-school context, the value of arts-practice workshops in providing people in the community with the skills to do more artistic activities was supported by 88 percent of respondents. More formal course programs such as those available in TAFE and university were not seen in quite such a positive light – about 80 percent of respondents were in favour, with the remaining one-fifth voicing a neutral or negative view of the value of such programs.

Thirdly, there was strong support for the importance of art centres, with 86 percent of respondents agreeing that "Having an art centre creates (could create) jobs and incomes in my community". For those respondents from communities with an existing art centre, this importance was an observable reality, whereas those artists from communities without such a facility could only say that having an art centre would potentially create economic opportunity in their community. In this regard, there would appear to be scope for further infrastructure development in some remote communities, with almost 60 percent of respondents agreeing with the proposition that facilities such as community centres, venues, etc. in their community at present were not enough to support more artistic activity. This observation relates particularly to infrastructure to support artistic work in music, film-making and multimedia production.

Finally, tourism is a significant issue in all parts of the region. In the Central Desert around Uluru, tourism has become a major industry, whilst in other parts of the region tourism is

almost non-existent. We will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of tourism as a source of economic benefit to remote communities in the next section of this Report. Here we simply consider the view of artists on this matter. Most respondents in our survey (86 percent) expressed a positive attitude to having tourists visit in order to experience Aboriginal culture at first hand. Furthermore, three-quarters of respondents (75 percent) thought that tourists can bring incomes and employment to communities; however, there remains a significant minority (25 percent) who hold neutral or negative views on this proposition. The latter result reflects the ambivalence felt in some quarters towards tourism, particularly high-volume mass tourism which, although potentially lucrative, may be culturally insensitive or even damaging.

**Table 13.1 Opinions regarding impact of arts and cultural activities on the economic sustainability of remote Indigenous communities (percent of all respondents and weighted average score)**

| Statements | N | Strongly agree | Agree | Don't know/ No opinion | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Total | Weighted average score** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | % | | | | |
| Bilingual education in the school can help young people in my community with jobs and incomes later on | 122 | 83 | 11 | 2 | 4 | * | **100** | 1.7 |
| Artists/ writers like myself can train young people in the community to become artists/ writers | 129 | 77 | 17 | 2 | 4 | - | **100** | 1.7 |
| Arts-practice workshops can provide people in my community with necessary skills to do more artistic activities | 117 | 68 | 20 | 11 | 1 | - | **100** | 1.5 |
| It is good (would be good) for tourists to visit our community to see our culture at first hand | 124 | 67 | 19 | 9 | 4 | * | **100** | 1.5 |
| Artistic activities like painting, music, dance, writing, can provide jobs and incomes for young people in my community | 127 | 69 | 15 | 10 | 6 | - | **100** | 1.5 |
| Having an art centre creates (could create) jobs and incomes in my community | 123 | 62 | 26 | 10 | * | 2 | **100** | 1.5 |
| Cultural activities, such as translation or cultural consulting, caring for country, cultural tourism can provide jobs and incomes for young people in my community | 116 | 67 | 11 | 16 | 5 | 1 | **100** | 1.4 |
| Sending young people to study in TAFE or university can help them to become artists/ writers | 122 | 69 | 10 | 11 | 7 | 3 | **100** | 1.3 |
| Over the long term, sales of art and other cultural activities i.e. tourism could bring in enough money to make our community more sustainable | 111 | 61 | 18 | 16 | 3 | 2 | **100** | 1.3 |
| Tourists can bring jobs and incomes to my community | 121 | 54 | 21 | 13 | 9 | 3 | **100** | 1.1 |
| The facilities in my community, such as community centres, venues, are not enough to support more artistic activity | 118 | 39 | 20 | 4 | 31 | 6 | **100** | 0.5 |

- indicates nil response in this sample.

* indicates less than 1%.

** 2 – "Strongly agree", 1 – "Agree", 0 – "Don't know/ No opinion", -1 – "Disagree", -2 – "Strongly disagree".

# 14. CONCLUSIONS: POLICY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data collected in this study and discussed in this Report provide the first comprehensive picture of the circumstances in which Indigenous art production occurs in remote communities in the Central Desert/APY Lands region. We argue that the visual artists, performing artists, composers, writers, film-makers and multimedia artists in the region represent a rich resource of cultural capital. The knowledge and skills of these artists already contribute significant levels of cultural goods and services to the regional economy. But the data show considerable untapped potential – experienced artists who are willing to work at cultural production but who for various reasons may not be able to participate fully in the art economy at the present time.

In this final section of the Report we identify a number of policy issues that arise in considering the present state and future potential of art and cultural production in the Central Desert/APY Lands region. The issues are grouped into the following categories: infrastructure needs; expanding economic opportunities; training and skill development; and cultural tourism. In considering policy development, it must be understood that policies affecting individual art and cultural practice in the region are formulated at local, State/Territory and national levels as well as among the various non-government and private sector organisations and agencies. Thus there is unlikely to be a single one-size-fits-all strategy applicable to all regional remote communities. Rather, different needs can be identified in different locations depending on a range of factors. In these circumstances there is clearly a requirement for coordination between the decisions and actions of stakeholders at various levels in the policy process.

## 14.1 INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

The art economy in the Central Desert/APY Lands region depends on a wide variety of infrastructure that supports and facilitates its operation. Some of this infrastructure is general, and serves everyone in the region, such as transport and communication services. Other categories of infrastructure are specific to the arts and cultural sector, providing the necessary support to enable artists and cultural producers to pursue their work. The latter include: art centres; facilities for performing artists, film-makers, multimedia and other artists; and cultural organisations of various sorts.

*Art centres*

Regional art centres and organisations are active in the visual arts market, forming partnerships and making connections with agents and galleries in the capital cities in Australia and overseas. The art centres play a vital role in the functioning of the Indigenous arts economy in the region. Artists are unequivocal in their recognition of this role in affecting their own individual and community circumstances. Our data show that artists in communities, which currently do not have an art centre recognise the benefits that might accrue if such a centre were to be established in their community. Nevertheless, while the art centre model has been working, it will need to rely on a continuation of support in future; owing to the hybrid nature of these organisations, such support will derive from both public and private sectors. In particular, art centres continue to provide many additional social services and other public benefits to their artists and the wider community which are outside of their core business operations, and for which they rarely receive any funding support, but which are essential for the communities to function and for artists to continue their work. It is important that funding arrangements for art centres recognise this reality for their ongoing sustainability.

*Resources for performing artists*

Generally, performing artists do not have access to widely available facilities to assist in the development of their creative work, and must often rely on their own resources – we found that for many musicians, for example, their main place of work was at home. Many of the performing artists in the region also face problems with finding opportunities to present their work due to a lack of appropriate venues or events. There are examples in the region of cultural or community facilities with a capacity to foster musical work by creative individuals, including schools which provide equipment and space for performance after hours, dedicated music studios such as those at PAW Media (Pintubi Anmatjere Warlpiri) in Yuendumu, and radio stations such as PY Media (Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara) based in Umuwa, which provides opportunities for musicians in the APY Lands. There is ample scope for extending these sorts of facilities to more communities with adequate funding support; they are the sorts of infrastructure facilities that can make a difference, especially for young people who have the potential to develop their creative skills and perhaps embark on a creative career.

*Support organisations*

Several cultural organisations exist in the Central Desert/APY Lands region that support the work of artists. One of the most important is Desart, the peak body representing more than 40 Aboriginal Art and Craft Centres in NT, SA and WA. The organisation, which is governed by an Aboriginal board, provides professional development opportunities, training programs, workshops with professional facilitators, and a range of other services for its members. It has been in operation since the early 1990s, and has its headquarters in Alice Springs.

In South Australia, the long-standing art-centre representative body is Ku Arts, which provides advocacy, support services, creative skills and professional development opportunities for artists and arts workers, with the aim of building a strong and vibrant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual arts sector in the State. Currently two of the art centres in the APY Lands (Ernabella Arts and Ninuku Arts) are members. In addition, a new organisation specifically representing art centres in the APY Lands has been formed, the APY Art Centre Collective, comprising a group of ten Indigenous owned and governed art centre enterprises. It aims to create new markets, support business development, and manage innovative collaborative regional artistic projects. The Collective is providing a significant commercial outlet for art from the APY Lands in one of Australia's major art market locations through the opening in 2017 of its gallery in Sydney.

The above organisations relate primarily to the visual arts and the crafts. There are also a number of organisations that support the performing arts, including IRCA, CAAMA, PY Media, PAW Media, Music NT and others. The financial and governance structures of all of the organisations referred to above differ from one to the other, but their important role in facilitating the development of arts and cultural practice in the region needs full acknowledgement in the formulation of policy strategies at all levels of public and private sector engagement affecting arts and cultural producers.

### 14.2 EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

A fundamental policy issue in addressing issues of disadvantage among remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities concerns how to open up opportunities for employment creation and income generation in the communities in a way that respects the needs and desires of the Indigenous people, with particular regard to employment that is both culturally sensitive

and culturally appropriate. Here we consider several means to expand economic opportunities for artists in the survey region.

*Earning income from culture-related activities*

In addition to the creative arts, which yields almost 60 percent on average of an artist's total income from work, there are a number of other culture-related activities which can also generate an income. For example, in the field of translation and interpreting, significant progress has been made in the last 15 years in developing a wider recognition among organisations and individuals working with Aboriginal communities to remunerate the work of translators and interpreters. In addition, the NT Government has expanded its Aboriginal Interpreter Service and its training and accreditation of Aboriginal interpreters locally. All these have contributed to generation of additional incomes to those community members who are able to provide such services, and reduced the pressure on those who had to do this work unpaid on top of their other duties. At regional, national and international levels some other cultural activities have also been generating economic opportunities for some Aboriginal cultural producers who engage in them, for example via cultural archiving and museology services to museums and galleries, or cultural and language education for students outside the region.

However, there are many artists who do not earn additional income through working at these activities, despite having the skills and experience to do so. We have argued that there are opportunities for more artists and cultural producers to become engaged in these areas. On a local level these activities are regularly provided by artists on an unpaid basis, for example in the form of: translation and interpretation when dealing with service providers for family or other community members; cross-cultural consulting or language translation on a job that does not include such services in its job description; providing cultural tourism for visitors to their communities; organising a welcoming ceremony, and so on. Cultural governance is another area that requires significant time and effort from local cultural producers, with some senior artists spending a great deal of time as directors and members of different boards and committees. A significant amount of this work is also performed on a voluntary basis; many organisations are not able to pay any sitting fees to their board directors and members, at times due to legislation[25], and some can only afford token amounts.

Better awareness among organisations working with Aboriginal people in the region and among the general public is required to acknowledge and remunerate appropriately the various cultural contributions that Indigenous artists and cultural producers have been providing. With the right support there could be significantly more economic opportunities derived from these sorts of activities, contributing in turn to developing a stronger arts and cultural sector in the region.

*Small business development*

Most visual artists in the Central Desert/APY Lands region work as independent individuals within the art centre framework. Although other artists such as musicians, film-makers, multimedia artists, or any artist working with digital technologies may also work as independent individuals, some may take up opportunities to establish small creative enterprises, perhaps on a collaborative or cooperative basis, and perhaps engaged in experimental art or developing new modes of distribution. In policy terms, such initiatives can link into a broader innovation agenda

[25] Not-for-profit organisations may not be allowed to pay their board directors and can only reimburse their directors' travel costs.

associated with the development of cultural and creative industries. Smart policy measures that recognise talent in this field can provide seed funding or small business incubators to encourage creative enterprise development.

One particular area where possibilities for small business development exist is in cultural tourism, discussed further below.

*Market and supply-chain issues*

An important avenue towards expanding economic opportunities for individual cultural producers in the region lies in developing the distribution and marketing components of the value chain. These are parts of the supply chain for artistic goods and services that need to be well established if work produced is to find an appropriate market. The demand for the output of artists may be local; examples include a dance performance for visitors to an art centre or a community; sale of artworks, bush cosmetics or other cultural goods through local outlets; or musical performances in local venues. Alternatively, markets may be found beyond the region, through sales of work interstate or internationally. To a large extent market development takes place in response to commercial incentives, but there is a role for judicious policy intervention, for example through provision of market intelligence, export promotion programs, and so on.

One area where market intervention is appropriate is in the matter of ethically-sourced Indigenous art. Art centres and many galleries act responsibly in providing certificates of authenticity for works they sell, but further progress is needed in regulatory measures to prevent the sale of fake Indigenous art products of every sort, and to promote best practice in the certification of authenticity by all sellers of products purporting to come from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. Improvement in such measures will not only enhance the capability of Indigenous artists to assert their economic and moral rights, they would also give buyers added confidence in the functioning of the Indigenous art market, with consequent positive effects on demand.

*Learning from successes of hybrid organisations*

Remote Indigenous communities provide cross-cultural environments. Working in these environments requires bridging different values, rationales, agendas and objectives. Enterprises and organisations that have understood and been able to accommodate this, such as ranger programs and art centres, have been able to function and thrive in these conditions. Their structures allow them to operate within the hybrid realm of the market, embracing government, community/families and the not-for-profit sectors. There is an opportunity to acknowledge such working models and learn from their experiences.

Hybrid enterprises and organisations operating in the region are interconnected, such that activation of any of them may lead to increased activities in others. For example, a successful tourism enterprise could stimulate local production of visual and performing arts, as well as perhaps film and multimedia works. These activities could in turn have flow-on effects into cultural archiving, jobs in arts management and administration, or other impacts. A further example might be a language and learning centre, which could be supported with additional government funding for a language-reviving project or for cultural archiving services; this could then lead to the centre taking on some publishing house functions and perhaps create opportunities for local Indigenous writers, storytellers and illustrators.

### 14.3 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

One of the most important areas for policy formulation at all levels of public administration in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in remote communities is in education and training. Much of the policy attention in this area is devoted to formal education processes; nevertheless, although this Report has shown how these processes are significant, they are not necessarily the most important avenues of knowledge acquisition and skill development for artists. The findings of this study show that for many arts and cultural jobs, local Indigenous cultural producers have already been trained locally and do not require a significant amount of additional training. When training is provided by local communities, the costs tend to be borne by the community, without outside financial support.

The survey results point towards a number of improvements that could be made in the delivery of Indigenous education, training and skills development in the region, as discussed below.

*School*

The importance of schooling in preparing children for life is of course well understood. Our data show that school education is recognised by artists as having some part to play in imparting cultural knowledge and skills that can be complementary to the essential role of family and community members. In some parts of the region both formal and informal programs co-exist and benefit from each other. These provide for cooperation between an art centre and the local school, whereby children visit the centre on a regular basis to participate in hands-on creative activity under the guidance of senior artists, or where senior artists visit the school to teach kids arts and cultural skills and language. Such programs have been in existence in many communities over the years, though rarely on a continuous basis. During the interviews, many older generation artists pointed to the usefulness and positive impact of these programs on their own artistic careers and there is an opportunity to strengthen these educational pathways by acknowledging their long-term nature and providing appropriate funding support.

A particular avenue through which schools assist in the development of young artistic talent is by sharing their facilities for some of the arts and cultural activities in their communities, such as providing opportunities to budding musicians to get together out of school hours to make music. For example, the schools in Amata and Santa Teresa make space and facilities available after hours for young musicians to practise, with the support of school staff. There appears to be scope for further expansion of these sorts of initiatives in the region's schools.

*Inter- and intra-generational cultural transmission*

In this study we have gathered extensive data on the ways in which cultural knowledge and skills continue to be passed down from one generation to the next by processes of intergenerational cultural transmission that have been in place throughout history. The learning pathways for artists that have proved to be most successful in the Central Desert/APY Lands region, as elsewhere, have been: observing/participating with a family member; learning on the job (self-learning); and learning from friends and other community members. Family members are particularly important in this context and their role and that of the two other pathways need to be taken into account in the planning of training and educational programs in the region.

At present the costs of this sort of art and cultural teaching are to a large extent borne by the community and via in-kind payments. Very few funding streams acknowledge these artists as teachers and therefore fund their work accordingly. For example, the sorts of culture programs

in schools referred to above are generally not continuous; usually they rely on short- to mid-term funding arrangements and at times on the good will of artists to work with students on a voluntary basis. Other educational initiatives that involve family and community members include training provided by arts centres, ranger organisations, culture and language centres and other hybrid organisations that have recognised the importance of inter- and intra-generational cultural transmission, and have incorporated local artists and members of the community into their training processes. But these organisations rarely have an appropriate budget or funding to support these activities, so the workers are likely to go unpaid. The Report points to the need to acknowledge the long-term educational benefit that these organisations can provide, and to ensure that they are properly supported.

A key resource in processes of inter- and intra-generational cultural transmission in the region is the knowledge, skills and status of senior artists. There is a danger that the knowledge and skills of these artists may not have the opportunity to be transferred. The survey data show that these artists – those with experience of 20 years and more – are 54 years of age on average (with the median age being 60 years). These artists are also already extremely busy, spending more hours on arts and cultural work than other less-experienced artists. During the survey interviews, many senior artists expressed the urge that they felt to transfer their knowledge, but recognised that there are limited avenues for them to do so on a regular basis outside their families.

*Skill transfers from outside*

Having to operate in an intercultural space explains why many organisations working to support art and cultural producers in remote Indigenous communities rely on non-Indigenous staff[26]. A decision to engage someone from outside who can contribute to an art centre in the hybrid space is always at the choice of the Indigenous Board Directors (the employer) who may benefit from such an engagement. These organisations bring together different cultures and values, and it is clear that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous approaches are required to navigate through this process – indeed one of the features of these organisations is the mixing of skills, experiences and knowledge of local Indigenous staff with those of non-Indigenous professionals coming from outside the communities. These incoming experts in turn benefit from training and advice received from senior artists and local Indigenous staff. While non-Indigenous managers come and go, art centre Directors and Indigenous arts workers are generally the keepers of the corporate knowledge. When these non-Indigenous experts leave, many years of valuable experience also goes. Such experience is a valuable resource that could be utilised and built upon. There are opportunities to harvest this knowledge; for example, if there were a database of these culturally experienced professionals, they could also be engaged as consultants later on in the arts and cultural sector or perhaps in other industries.

[26] For example, in many art centres, the managers come from outside the community. To some extent, it is important that an art centre receive all the industry knowledge it can get from someone with significant experience in the industry. On the other hand, concerns could be raised with regard to building local capacity if the top jobs are filled externally. But it may also happen that local Indigenous staff, even those with a full range of required experience, may prefer not to take on managerial duties. This could be due to multi-cultural complexities, such as dealing with financial needs of the art centre, or having to represent and service all the art centre's artists while being bound by obligations to family members. In these cases, the experienced local staff members may prefer simply to provide guidance to the non-Indigenous manager.

*Access to country*

The fundamental relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the land is well understood, and is reflected in our survey data – virtually all artists spend some part of their time caring for country, and many rely on accessing their country as a source of knowledge and creative inspiration, or for gathering materials for their art production. The data provide compelling evidence in support of the need for securing artists' access to country, if art and culture are to become a stronger source of economic empowerment for remote Aboriginal communities in the Central Desert/APY Lands region.

*Further education*

Only relatively few artists in the study region continue beyond school to obtain tertiary level qualifications, but there are some less formal post-school educational pathways for expanding artists' knowledge and skills, such as short courses and workshops provided through an art centre or other organisation or agency. We noted earlier the example of the workshops provided by Tjanpi Desert Weavers in the APY Lands. Some art centres will occasionally host a visiting artist or educator to train local practitioners in particular techniques such as printmaking, fabric design, and so on. Film and multimedia organisations in remote localities may provide short courses in documentary film-making, such as those that have been arranged and financed by the Australian Film, Television and Radio School for delivery via PAW Media in Yuendumu. There is a need for continued funding for such initiatives to enhance the skill level among remote Indigenous film-makers and other artists. There is a particularly strong case for supporting workshops and short courses taught by Indigenous senior artists and cultural producers from the region, as our data show that learning from family and community members provide the most effective ways for acquiring industry skills.

*Business skills*

There is a strong need for business training in remote communities that could help artists, cultural producers and other community members to understand the business side of art and cultural production. Many Indigenous artists in remote communities do not completely understand the art business – how their payments are calculated, taxes are deducted, where buyers for their outputs come from, and how the market operates. Part of the function of peak organisations such as Desart is to undertake this business training, and many art centres have taken on a responsibility for educating their artists, their artists' families, and the wider community in the business aspects of the arts – one of the aims of such initiatives is to stop humbugging[27]. More can be done if dedicated funding and support materials could be provided for organisations to take on this function. Use of local examples and best practices elsewhere would be particularly beneficial. Such support could significantly reduce pressure on organisations' staff, and could potentially help to achieve higher rates of staff retention.

[27] The word "humbug" is defined as unreasonable/incessant demands from relatives or other community members (Johnston et al. 2007: 493).

### 14.4 CULTURAL TOURISM

Sale of the goods and services produced by artists requires a market, and in remote locations accessible markets may exist only through channels leading to customers who may be located far away. However, tourism is a means to bring customers directly to the source of supply. Tourists who visit remote communities can engage with Indigenous culture at first hand and hopefully buy artworks or attend performances staged by local artists. There is a significant demand from both domestic and international tourists to experience Indigenous culture; for example, international arts tourists who visited regional areas of the Northern Territory in 2017 had particularly high levels of engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, with 79 percent of them attending a First Nations arts activity while visiting Australia (Australia Council for the Arts, 2018: 20)[28].

In the Central Desert/APY Lands region, tourism occurs in three distinct areas: at Yulara and Uluru; in the rest of the Central Desert; and in the APY Lands.

*Uluru*

Uluru has been a magnet for Australian and international tourists for many years, and visitor numbers have continued to rise. In recent years there has been a significant expansion in the provision of accommodation, restaurants, shopping and tourist services in Yulara and surrounds. Visitors are attracted by the environmental and cultural experiences they can enjoy. Unfortunately, the industry in the region exhibits some of the characteristics of high-volume mass tourism, and for some visitors, engagement with Anangu culture remains superficial or non-existent. For those tourists seeking a more authentic contact with the local culture, the Yulara Cultural Centre provides outlets for sale of artworks by artists from the region through the Maruku and Walkatjara art galleries. There are usually some artists at work in the Walkatjara space with whom tourists can converse, and Maruku also provides cultural workshops and tours with Indigenous or non-Indigenous guides. However, there are complaints that the main resort at Yulara sells artworks, souvenirs and other artefacts that are not authentically derived from Anangu culture, and some of the shows staged to entertain tourists and showcase Aboriginal culture may employ non-local performers. It must be acknowledged, however, that local talent willing and able to perform may sometimes be in short supply.

There have been a number of governance and management issues in the operations of the tourist industry in Central Australia in recent years. From the standpoint of the present study, however, a primary policy concern relates to the impact of the tourist industry on the Anangu population. There is a need for effective regulatory and other policy measures to control the development of the industry in this region so as to safeguard the local culture, to protect its cultural values, and to ensure that an appropriate measure of the revenues and employment generated by the industry accrue to the benefit of the local Indigenous population.

*Central Desert*

Tourism in the remainder of Central Australia is well developed in some areas, less so in others. Visitation to the more distant locations is constrained by road conditions and seasonal weather patterns. Alice Springs, as the main regional town, is a tourist destination in its own right, with

[28] Further data on tourism in the Central Desert can be found in the regional profiles published periodically by Tourism NT for Alice Springs/MacDonnell and the Lasseter tourism region – the latter includes Uluru and surrounds (Tourism NT, 2018).

its public and commercial galleries, historic connections, and modern tourist amenities. Along the Larapinta Trail, which runs west from Alice Springs and covers more than 200 km., there are opportunities for culture and nature tourism that can connect visitors to place, combining environmental and cultural experiences with walking, trail-biking, bird-watching, and camping. A different westerly route out of Alice Springs takes tourists to the historic Lutheran Mission site at Hermannsburg, where visitors can tour the site and buy works by the well-known Hermannsburg Potters.

Although there has been a great deal of tourism development in Central Australia, there is scope for much more in the niche/cultural tourism space. In some locations, opportunities exist for the establishment of small family-based tourism enterprises involving Aboriginal individuals and focussing on providing small-group art/culture/nature experiences for discriminating visitors. There are many ways to encourage the involvement of Indigenous people in these initiatives. For example, in some communities there are likely to be experienced cultural producers who are good storytellers and who feel comfortable talking to visitors, enabling them to act as tour guides, interpreters and translators for tourists individually or in groups. The rangers could possibly provide a good model here, although it should be remembered that they are mostly well funded for their work, and similar resources would need to be provided for Indigenous cultural tourism development on anything like a similar scale.

Managing the business aspects of these prospective enterprises would require skill development programs such as workshops, short-course training sessions, and/or small business incubators tailored to the needs of family-based tourism initiatives. A well-planned and adequately funded strategy focussing on small Indigenous family- and community-run businesses is needed for this proposal to become a reality. If it did so, these enterprises could become a prime example of a participatory economy in the region, engaging Aboriginal individuals and communities, and helping to reduce levels of welfare dependency among the Indigenous population.

*APY Lands*

Tourism in the APY Lands of South Australia is virtually non-existent, partly because of remoteness and difficulties of road access, and partly because of strict permit requirements for entry onto the Lands that are not encouraging to tourists[29]. Small numbers of visitors do come occasionally to visit communities and art centres in the region. For example, groups of collectors or other visitors arrive from time to time in various centres on charter flights from Alice Springs and elsewhere; in the art centres they see works and may make a purchase or two. But there is virtually no readily available commercial accommodation in the Lands apart from a small self-catering establishment in Mimili, and there are no restaurants or cafes, and little in the way of ready-made food apart from what may be available at the hot food counter in some community supermarkets. In short, at the present time the facilities to cater for any significant expansion of tourist numbers in the APY Lands do not exist.

Yet the potential is there for development of cultural tourism in the region, particularly since the main road running west from the Stuart Highway is undergoing a major upgrade, at least as far as Pukatja. When the new road is completed, the possibility will open up for tourist buses to access the region, subject of course to appropriate permissions. Artists we interviewed in communities affected by the road improvement (Mimili, Fregon, Pukatja/Ernabella) expressed

[29] Efforts have been made from time to time to draw up strategic plans for advancing tourism in the APY Lands; see, for example, Koch and Tregenza (2009).

mainly positive views about the prospect of a growth in tourist numbers, which could be expected to bring an increase in sales of their work. Nevertheless, some were concerned that the influx of visitors should be limited and not on a scale similar to the numbers visiting Uluru.

It is apparent that, whilst tourism development in the APY Lands could be expected to bring a range of economic benefits to the art economy and to individual artists, a prerequisite will be the establishment of infrastructure to cater to tourists' needs. In view of the reservations expressed about the adverse impacts of a rapid growth in tourist numbers, there are strong grounds for focussing any tourism development strategy for the Lands on small-scale cultural tourism involving discriminating and culturally-sensitive visitors. It goes without saying that any policy strategies in this area must be initiated by and with the agreement of the traditional owners and the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Executive and members.

### 14.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Our aim in carrying out this study has been to document the nature of art and cultural production by individual Indigenous cultural producers in the Central Desert/APY Lands region, and to assess the extent to which these activities might provide a means to integrate economic and cultural development in the region's remote communities. In this final section of this Report, we have drawn together some of the key policy issues that have emerged from the study. As we have noted, there is considerable variation across the region in existing economic, social and cultural circumstances and in different communities' potential for future development. It is impossible to generalise in recommending policy action. Moreover, it is unlikely that a single policy measure can be found that will address all the issues at once; rather a mix of complementary measures will be needed to address particular aspects.

It is important also to bear in mind that we are not suggesting that art and cultural production can on its own transform any remote community; rather, we argue that in the right conditions it can be an effective avenue towards employment creation and income generation, helping to improve the long-term prospects for economic sustainability and social viability, and doing so in a way that respects the fundamental importance of Indigenous culture. All the policy recommendations that flow from this study are pointed in this direction.

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## APPENDIX 1.

**Concordance between cultural-economic activities in the Central Desert/APY Lands Region and the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) 2006**

| Cultural-economic activities | Division – Subdivision | Group – Class |
|---|---|---|
| **CREATIVE ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES** | | |
| Painting, printmaking, sculpturing, textiles, carvings, weaving, ceramics, glass, jewellery, photography | R Arts and Recreation Services - 90 Creative and Performing Arts Activities | 900 Creative and Performing Arts Activities |
| Performing | R Arts and Recreation Services - 90 Creative and Performing Arts Activities | 900 Creative and Performing Arts Activities |
| Composing or choreographing | R Arts and Recreation Services - 90 Creative and Performing Arts Activities | 900 Creative and Performing Arts Activities |
| Writing or storytelling | R Arts and Recreation Services - 90 Creative and Performing Arts Activities | 900 Creative and Performing Arts Activities |
| Making film, television, audio or multimedia work | J Information Media and Telecommunications – 55 Motion Picture and Sound Recording Activities | 551 Motion Picture and Video Activities<br>552 Sound Recording and Music Publishing |
| **ARTS- AND-CULTURE-RELATED ACTIVITIES** | | |
| Participating in ceremonies | S Other Services - 95 Personal and Other Services | 954 Religious Services<br>952 Funeral, Crematorium and Cemetery Services |
| Interpreting, translating or cross-cultural consulting | M Professional, Scientific and Technical Services - 69 Professional, Scientific And Technical Services (Except Computer System Design And Related Services) | 699 Other Professional, Scientific and Technical Services |
| Cultural archiving, record keeping | J Information Media and Telecommunications – 60 Library and Other Information Services | 601 Libraries and Archives |
| | R Arts and Recreation Services - 89 Heritage Activities | 891 Museum Operation |
| Serving on a cultural board, committee or council | O Public Administration and Safety - 75 Public Administration[30] | 696 Management and Related Consulting Services<br>751 Central Government Administration<br>752 State Government Administration<br>753 Local Government Administration<br>955 Civic, Professional and Other Interest Group Services |

[30] Excluding the management of commercial and business activities or activities other than central, state or local government administration are included in the classes appropriate to these activities.

| Cultural-economic activities | Division – Subdivision | Group – Class |
|---|---|---|
| Teaching others in arts and cultural activities | P Education and Training 82 Adult, Community and Other Education | 821 Adult, Community and Other Education; 822 Educational Support Services |
| Caring for country | R Arts and Recreation Services Subdivision - 89 Heritage Activities | 892 Parks and Gardens Operations |
| Fishing, hunting, gathering or preparing bush food | A Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing - 04 Fishing, Hunting and Trapping | 041 Fishing; 042 Hunting and Trapping |
| Making Indigenous medicines or cosmetics or providing Indigenous health services | Q Health Care and Social Assistance - 85 Medical and Other Health Care Services | 851 Medical Services |
| | C Manufacturing - 18 Basic Chemical and Chemical Product Manufacturing | 184 Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Product Manufacturing |
| Arts management | M Professional, Scientific and Technical Services - 69 Professional, Scientific And Technical Services (Except Computer System Design And Related Services) | 696 Management and Related Consulting Services |
| Arts administration | N Administrative and Support Services - 72 Administrative Services | 729 Other Administrative Services |
| Providing cultural tourism services | N Administrative and Support Services - 72 Administrative Services | 722 Travel Agency and Tour Arrangement Services |

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