

NSW Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Strategy

Background Paper: NSW Aboriginal Arts and Culture Snapshot 2009

Arts NSW
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Communities
arts nsw

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Introduction: What is this Background Paper about?

This Background Paper – the *NSW Aboriginal Arts and Culture Snapshot 2009* – is meant to be read with Arts NSW's Issues Paper on the NSW Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Strategy 2010 to 2014.

This Background Paper:

- Lists the policies, principles and protocols underlying the NSW Government's approach to support for Aboriginal arts and culture;
- Provides statistical information on the Aboriginal population of NSW;
- Identifies NSW Aboriginal organisations that support Aboriginal arts and cultural practice within NSW;
- Sketches the geographic spread of Aboriginal arts and cultural practice across NSW;
- Provides a snapshot of Aboriginal arts and cultural programs in NSW, including programs supported by Arts NSW, the Australia Council and those provided by the state cultural institutions; and
- Summarises current national and state funding priorities that are relevant to Aboriginal arts and culture in NSW.

The aim of this Background Paper is to inform consultation meetings that are being held with the Aboriginal arts and cultural sector to help develop the NSW Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Strategy 2010 to 2014.

Policies, Principles and Protocols:

Driving Elements of the NSW Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Strategy 2010 to 2014

The NSW Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Strategy 2010 to 2014 is being developed in the context of important Commonwealth and state action to reduce disadvantage faced by Aboriginal people in Australia.

In NSW, the main Policy Frameworks relevant to the NSW Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Strategy are:

- *Closing the Gap* – a national plan to reduce Aboriginal disadvantage;
- *The NSW State Plan 2006 to 2016*
- The NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs' *Regional Action Plans* under the *Two Ways Together* plan.

These frameworks emphasise the importance of working across government and in partnership with Aboriginal organisations to improve social and economic support for Aboriginal people. More information on the relevance of these policies to Aboriginal arts and culture is at **Appendix 1**.

The NSW Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Strategy is intended to build on the progress achieved so far. It is informed by seven general **Principles**¹. These are -

1. An acknowledgement of the significance of Aboriginal Australia as the oldest living culture in the world.
2. An acknowledgement of the impact of colonisation on Indigenous people and their cultural heritage.
3. An acknowledgement that Indigenous culture is informed by the past, and the recognition that Indigenous cultural expression is a vital part of contemporary society.
4. A recognition of the respect due for the cultural diversity of Indigenous people.
5. Support for the principle of self-determination in setting cultural priorities and the adoption of appropriate cultural protocols in the public sector.
6. An acknowledgement of the role of the public sector - representing as it does the community as a whole - in supporting, maintaining and nurturing Indigenous cultural heritage and expression.
7. A recognition of the intellectual and moral rights of Indigenous people to their diverse cultural expressions.

Arts NSW's **Protocols**² for Aboriginal arts and culture are -

1. All Aboriginal people are entitled to respect for their culture.
2. Aboriginal cultural heritage, including cultural expression, is the intellectual property of Aboriginal people.

¹ Ministry for the Arts, March 2000, *Policy for the promotion of Support of Indigenous Arts and Cultural Activity in NSW*

² Ministry for the Arts, November 2000, *Indigenous Arts Protocols*

3. Aboriginal people have a right to protect and manage the use of their cultural heritage and expression.
4. Aboriginal people have a right to benefits (such as training, employment, royalties and promotion) accruing from any activities that use their cultural heritage and expression.
5. Aboriginal people have a right to Government support in the protection and maintenance of their cultural heritage and expression.

Statistical snapshot of the Aboriginal population of NSW

Aboriginal Affairs NSW's population projections estimate:

- In 2009: 162,871 Aboriginal people are living in NSW
- In 2011: 170,096 Aboriginal people will be living in NSW

Data from the 2006 Census reported:

- 152,685 Aboriginal people live in NSW
- 29.5% of Aboriginal people in Australia live in NSW
- Aboriginal people are 2.24% of the NSW population

- 74,755 Aboriginal people aged 19 years or younger live in NSW
- 8,175 Aboriginal people aged 60 years or over live in NSW

- 32% of Aboriginal people in NSW live in the Sydney metropolitan area
- 28,450 Aboriginal people live in Western Sydney
- Aboriginal people are 1.5% of the population of Western Sydney

- 823 Aboriginal people in NSW were employed in a cultural occupation as their main job – this is 2.3% of the employed Aboriginal population in NSW

The 2002 ABS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey of people aged 15 years or over (the most recent survey) reported:

- 5,400 Aboriginal people lived in remote areas of NSW

- 30% of Aboriginal people in NSW had been to an Indigenous festival or carnival involving art, craft, music or dance

- 42% of Aboriginal people living in non-remote areas of NSW had attended movies, theatres or concerts in the previous three months and 27% had visited a library, museum or art gallery
- Of the 57 discrete Indigenous communities in NSW, 26 had a hall or meeting area, 15 had an arts or cultural centre and 4 had a library. 18 had sporting facilities.

The Aboriginal arts and cultural sector in NSW

The development of a coherent NSW Aboriginal arts and cultural sector is, in many ways, still in its infancy. Whilst NSW has a long history of Aboriginal visual artists, musicians and actors, Aboriginal arts or cultural organisations are still relatively new with many starting in the 1970's and 1980's:

- The National Black Theatre Company - 1972
- Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre - 1976
- Aboriginal Dance Theatre Redfern - 1979
- Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative - 1987
- Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Keeping Place, Armidale - 1988
- Bangarra Dance Theatre - 1989

For this *NSW Aboriginal Arts and Culture Snapshot 2009* on the Aboriginal arts and cultural sector, the sector has been divided into four separate elements:

- Aboriginal individuals;
- Aboriginal organisations;
- Organisations in the non-Aboriginal sector that support Aboriginal arts and cultural development; and
- Local government.

Although culture also encompasses land and language, this paper provides information on aspects of Aboriginal cultural expression that are supported by NSW and national arts funding.

Aboriginal Individuals

The majority of Aboriginal artists operating solely as individuals are within the music, dance and literature sectors. For individuals, support through mentoring and training can come from organisations such as the Whichway music program, the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA), the Aboriginal Dance Theatre Redfern and writers' centres such as the South Coast Writers' Centre.

Aboriginal Organisations

There are four tiers of Aboriginal organisations that could be categorised as supporting and developing the full spectrum of Aboriginal arts and cultural practice with NSW.

Peak Aboriginal organisations:

Only Gadigal Information Service is viewed as a peak Aboriginal organisation within NSW. It provides community-based media, arts and information to Sydney's Indigenous people.

Gadigal is the only NSW organisation funded as a key organisation through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board (ATSIAB) of the Australia Council.

Aboriginal Cultural and Arts Organisations:

Aboriginal organisations that have a key focus of arts and cultural development are found within two core areas:

- The Aboriginal visual arts and craft sector, which is where the largest proportion of organisations can be found; and
- Aboriginal Cultural Centres and Keeping Places.

NSW Local Aboriginal Land Councils:

The New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC) was established under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 (NSW)* and is a self funding statutory authority responsible for promoting and protecting the rights of the Aboriginal people of NSW.

The State's Land Council network operates as a two tiered structure, comprising the peak body, NSWALC, which operates from Parramatta and a small number of zone offices around the state, and 121 Local Aboriginal Land Councils, which are governed by elected Boards.

The Local Aboriginal Land Councils undertake a range of cultural activities from community-based visual arts projects to cultural heritage maintenance and the running of Aboriginal cultural centres and keeping places.

Other Aboriginal Organisations:

A variety of Aboriginal organisations incorporate arts and cultural programs within their work. These organisations can range from Elders groups, language centres, health centres, housing cooperatives, education groups and employment agencies. Although these organisations may have a limited focus or capacity for the development or delivery

of arts and cultural programs, they may in fact play an important role to the local Aboriginal community as the only infrastructure available to facilitate such programs.

Non-Aboriginal Arts Sector

Many mainstream arts and cultural organisations have developed specific arts and cultural programs and initiatives that support Aboriginal arts and cultural development. These organisations include regional galleries, major performing arts companies, service and advocacy organisations as well as the small to medium sector within the performing arts. Some examples of this support are provided below on page 24 but accurate data on this 'embedded' programming is difficult to capture.

Local Government

Local councils provide funding and support for local and regional arts and cultural infrastructure and activities. This includes the development of Aboriginal arts and cultural initiatives and programs. Councils also play a key role in cultural planning for their area and their broader region. Arts NSW's Arts Funding Program encourages funding applications from arts organisations engaged in strategic partnerships with local Councils.

An underpinning principle of the *Local Government Cultural Accord* is that local councils and the NSW Government continue their commitment to the development of contemporary Aboriginal culture.

Examples of the continuing growth of support are the annual NSW Local Government Cultural Awards and cultural plans developed by local councils.

Geographic spread of Aboriginal arts and cultural practice across NSW

Sydney

Gadigal Information Service, the NSW peak Aboriginal organisation, is located within the Sydney region.

The proximity of the Eora College, CarriageWorks and companies such as PACT Youth Theatre, Performance Space and Legs on the Wall to the local Aboriginal community of Redfern and Waterloo and the historical legacy of the National Black Theatre has seen a renaissance in a community-driven Aboriginal performing arts movement.

Western Sydney

Although Western Sydney is widely recognised as having the largest Aboriginal population within Australia this community is often perceived as less prominent as other population centres. In part, this is due to the Western Sydney Aboriginal population being only 1.5% of the 1.9 million people in the region.

Arts NSW's *Western Sydney Arts Strategy, Stage 2* identified the need for a more strategic approach to nurture Aboriginal arts and cultural initiatives in the region. New initiatives were developed to complement and build upon previous investment within the region through the creation of Aboriginal arts and cultural positions within key Western Sydney arts infrastructure. In 2007 and 2008, \$160,000 was invested in twelve strategic initiatives in the two key areas of visual arts and the performing arts.

Illawarra

The Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation is a focal point for Aboriginal arts and cultural programs within the Illawarra region. The organisation incorporates an Aboriginal cultural centre and art gallery, elders group arts and craft program, and youth programs through art and music.

Hunter/Central Coast

The National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) Dance College is based at Kariong on the Central Coast. NAISDA runs training courses in contemporary Australian Indigenous dance as well as outreach and performance programs.

Aboriginal visual arts has a strong presence in the collection and exhibitions of the Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery. The Arwarbukarl Cultural Resource Association provides cultural and heritage support and information. The Aboriginal Missions and Reserves Historical Database is administered by the School of Liberal Arts and Wollotuka School of Aboriginal Studies at the University of Newcastle.

Clarence-Tweed

The development of an emerging Aboriginal visual arts sector has been supported by Arts Northern Rivers through the strategic Indigenous Arts Development Project and Business Centre, which incorporates the employment of an Indigenous Arts Development Officer as well as an Arts Business Manager, to assist Indigenous artists to develop their professional art practice and to provide outreach support for artists.

Mid-North Coast

A strong community based Aboriginal visual arts sector exists with the region.

The Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-op in Nambucca Heads began in 1986, when the Gumbaynggirr Elders got together to revive their language and culture.

Muurrbay is involved with TAFE, schools, pre-schools and classes for families, teaching the Gumbaynggirr language, Aboriginal art (including traditional stories and beliefs), and cultural practices such as art, ceramics and mosaic making. Muurrbay also conduct workshops in creative writing and film making, workshops for teachers of the Gumbaynggirr language and supports the Gumbaynggirr Elders Choir.

The Yarrowarra Aboriginal Centre offers the visitor an insight into the local Aboriginal culture and features the work of Wadjar Arts Group.

The *Arts Mid-North Coast Aboriginal Cultural Strategy 2008 – 2013* has identified an extensive range of programs including an annual festival, tourism projects, recording of stories, support for the Aboriginal Medical Service to introduce art and health projects, support for arts and cultural businesses and the employment of a Regional Aboriginal Community Development Officer and 12 coordinators in the region's Land Councils.

Northern

The Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Keeping Place in Armidale is one of NSW's longest running cultural centres. The centre supports the promotion of Aboriginal culture and has undertaken a significant visual arts program over the last two years. The centre continues to grow and has expanded from a local community base to a regional focus.

North Western

Outback Arts, operating in one of the largest and most diverse geographic areas, is supporting the development of Aboriginal arts and culture through the employment of six part-time Regional Indigenous Cultural Development Officers. These officers work on a range of initiatives identified in Outback Arts' 2006 Aboriginal arts strategy to promote art and cultural activities among Aboriginal communities in the region and establish foundations for sustainable economic activity through art and culture.

South Eastern

This region has two major cultural centres and keeping places in Wallaga Lake and Eden.

Kari Yalla is an Aboriginal Artists Co-operative for the South East that has been established in the past year and is auspiced by South East Arts Region (SEAR).

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

A clearer picture of Aboriginal arts centres, art businesses and artists in regional areas of the state will be available when Regional Arts NSW completes its research project into the sector in early 2010.

NSW State Cultural Institutions

Within the NSW Government's arts portfolio, the state cultural institutions are a significant part of the NSW arts and cultural sector. The Government provided over \$240 million in 2009-10 to support the State's cultural institutions in their provision of world class quality programs and services.

The institutions manage assets in excess of \$6 billion including collections valued at \$3.8 billion, attract audiences in excess of 2.9 million a year, and make their collections and expertise available across the State via touring programs and on line services.

The state cultural institutions comprise:

- Five collecting institutions – the Art Gallery of NSW, Australian Museum, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, Powerhouse Museum and State Library of NSW;
- The Sydney Opera House; and
- Screen NSW.

Increasing participation in and access to their exhibitions, public programs and performances are fundamental responsibilities of these state institutions, including participation and access by Aboriginal people in NSW. The state cultural institutions also contribute to Aboriginal arts and cultural development through their collection management, infrastructure and specialist expertise.

Below are further descriptions of each cultural institution and examples of their current support for Aboriginal arts and culture:

Art Gallery of NSW

The Art Gallery of NSW is one of Australia's foremost art museums, with significant collections of Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, European, Asian and contemporary art. The gallery provides public lectures, film screenings, performances and other services, and also operates the Brett Whitely studio in Surry Hills. In 2009 the Gallery saw a 26% increase in attendance from the previous year to 1.7 million visits, with 436 940 people attending its four ticketed shows.

The Art Gallery holds a substantial collection of Aboriginal art displayed in its permanent Yiribana Gallery. The Gallery also has a range of temporary exhibitions and public programs on Aboriginal artists, history and culture.

The Gallery has specialist Aboriginal curatorial and program staff positions.

Australian Museum

The Australian Museum is a leading cultural attraction and scientific research institution located in Sydney's CBD. At the heart of the Museum is a collection of more than 16 million objects – specimens of creatures large and small, samples from the mineral kingdom, and cultural artefacts from Indigenous Australia and the Pacific. The collection represents a physical timeline of environmental and cultural history. The Museum and its collections attract people from Sydney, rural Australia and internationally with more than 320,000 visitors in 2008-09.

The Museum has an extensive collection of Aboriginal cultural materials. The Museum's collections and research focus on the material culture, ethnography, history and archaeology of the Indigenous peoples of Australia. The museum encourages a broad range of Aboriginal researchers, artists and cultural practitioners to access its collections of Aboriginal material culture.

Exhibitions, including those in the permanent Indigenous Australians gallery, public programs and outreach services increase access to and the appreciation of Aboriginal arts and culture.

The Museum employs three permanent Aboriginal staff: its Aboriginal Unit Manager; and an Indigenous Education Officer and an Education Assistant in its Learning Services section.

Historic Houses Trust of NSW

The Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales was established under the *Historic Houses Act 1980* to manage, conserve and interpret the properties vested in it, for the education and enjoyment of the public. The Trust manages sites of historical and cultural importance that tell a story about the history and development of NSW.

The Trust manages 13 properties, 11 of which are open to the public as museums. The Trust's properties also play host to theatre, music and dance performances, lectures, workshops, seminars, conferences and community events. In 2009 the total of visitation to the Trust's grounds, exhibitions and paid admission sites was 2,014,192 people.

Members of Boolarng Nangamai Aboriginal Art and Culture Studio collaborated with the Museum of Sydney on the Gadigal Place exhibition. They designed and created a range of traditional and culturally significant objects to enhance the Museum's interpretation of Aboriginal Sydney.

Powerhouse Museum

The Powerhouse Museum collects and displays materials in the areas of science, technology, industry, design, decorative arts and social history, and presents lectures, performances, interactive displays and educational programs. In 2008-09 over 565,000 people attended the Museum.

The Museum has a Curator of Koori Culture and History and an Indigenous culture gallery.

Indigenous astronomy is one of the Sydney Observatory's permanent displays and is an integral part of the Observatory's programs explaining of the night sky over Sydney.

State Library of NSW

The State Library of NSW is the State's major reference and research library and includes the State Reference Library and the Mitchell and Dixson collections. The State Library supports the network of public libraries across the State operated by local authorities with annual subsidies, library development grants and professional support.

The Library has two designated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff positions and also employs two Indigenous cadets during semester breaks.

The Library aims to increase awareness in the community of its services, exhibitions and resources on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their history and culture. The library's two Indigenous Service Librarians designed a half-day training program on Aboriginal Cultural Awareness to Library staff. The program has increased staff knowledge and awareness of Aboriginal history and culture and Aboriginal resources in the State Library, and improved the Library's ability to respond to the needs of Aboriginal

clients and answer inquiries relating to Aboriginal subjects. Nine sessions were presented to 164 client-facing staff from six branches across the Library between February and May 2009.

The Indigenous Services Librarians have promoted access to the Library's Indigenous collections and services. Their Indigenous League Legends display (6 July to 3 August 2008), created as part of NAIDOC Week and to mark the game's centennial year, attracted coverage by *The Daily Telegraph*, local newspapers, National Indigenous TV, SBS Radio's Aboriginal program and ABC Radio South East.

Sydney Opera House (SOH)

The Sydney Opera House, as one of the 20th century's most significant buildings, is Australia's premier performing arts centre and tourist attraction. The House is operated and maintained for the NSW Government by the Sydney Opera House Trust. The Trust also acts as an entrepreneur, producer and co-presenter for some performances and activities.

SOH participates in the Graduate Work Placement Program with the NSW Department of Education and Training, (the Elsa Dixon Graduate Placement program). In 2009 SOH recruited three indigenous graduates for a placement each for 12 weeks employment.

SOH is developing a two year Young Indigenous Producer Fellowship program.

The Message Sticks Indigenous Film Festival is an annual event at SOH that is solely dedicated to films made by and about Indigenous people.

Screen NSW

Screen NSW is a partner agency of Industry and Investment NSW, with a key role in the creative and economic development of the state.

Screen NSW stimulates creative and business opportunities in the screen industry and promotes innovation in screen content and technology, and champions the contribution the NSW screen industry makes to our culture, economy and society.

Screen NSW has a leadership role in promoting partnerships across the sector and providing "more than money" in connecting individuals and organisations, providing information through regular industry events, and supporting a vibrant and informed screen community.

In 2009 Screen NSW began work on its *Reconciliation Action Plan* in consultation with local Indigenous filmmakers, industry organisations and other partners.

Snapshot of Aboriginal art forms and cultural practice in NSW

Aboriginal Cultural Practice

A number of Aboriginal cultural centres and keeping places within NSW play an important role in the preservation, maintenance and promotion of Aboriginal art and culture.

These centres such as Dhiiyann at Moree display and interpret local and regional traditional Aboriginal cultural heritage whilst being a catalyst for the development of contemporary forms of cultural expression.

Major cultural celebrations, such as Yabun and Vibe 3 on 3, play an important role for many Aboriginal communities in celebrating the wealth and diversity of Aboriginal cultural and artistic expression.

Visual Arts and Craft

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

This Aboriginal arts and cultural sector encompasses a number of diverse themes that embody each artist's background and share a common thread through their Aboriginality. These themes include commentary on Australian history, social interaction and political expression, as well as cultural transmission through the continuance of cultural and artistic traditions.

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

There has been a major movement in the development of various models of Aboriginal art centres within NSW over the last six years. The *Indigenous Art Centres Directory 2006* published by the Commonwealth Department of Communication, Information Technology and the Arts (now the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts) lists fifteen art centres within NSW. These are as follows:

- Aboriginal Cultural Centre Monaroo Bobberrer Guru – Eden
- Armidale and Region Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Keeping Place – Armidale
- Boolarng Nangamai Aboriginal Art and Culture Studio – Gerringong

- Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative – Sydney
- Budamurra Aboriginal Corporation – Ulladulla
- Euraba Paper Aboriginal Corporation – Toomelah
- Ngurrala Aboriginal Corporation – Macksville
- Orana Aboriginal Corporation – Wellington
- Shed Designs – South Grafton
- South Coast Aboriginal Cultural Centre – Nowra
- Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council – Buxton
- Tobwabba Art – Forster
- Ulugundahi Art and Culture Gallery – Maclean
- Umbarra Aboriginal Corporation – Akolele
- Yarrawarra Aboriginal Corporation – Corindi Beach.

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

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

The NSW regional gallery network comprises 34 regional galleries throughout the State. Many galleries have undertaken Aboriginal arts projects and shown Aboriginal-based exhibitions deriving from a local, state and national representation. A number of these galleries – Campbelltown, Penrith, Lake Macquarie, Grafton and Moree – have embedded a strong Aboriginal presence within their annual operations and programs.

Visual arts and craft are utilised within a wide range of social-based programs to address social well being and early intervention. These programs endeavour to utilise visual arts to enable people to explore issues and build skills to improve social and economic opportunities.

Visual arts-based programs are also delivered through agencies such as NSW Juvenile Justice and Corrective Services NSW and are a part of wider developmental programs that focus on personal development as well as specific activity-based art programs for young offenders.

Music

Aboriginal contemporary music is a growth sector both within NSW and across Australia. It is supported through the continued development of a NSW Aboriginal music strategy by Arts NSW and the recent Cultural Ministers *Council's Indigenous Contemporary Music Action Plan*.

Over the last eight years, Arts NSW has undertaken seven strategic initiatives to support the development of the NSW-based contemporary Aboriginal music industry on a national and international platform in partnership with Gadigal Information Service and MusicNSW. Since 2000, over 60 Indigenous artists have been assisted in to develop their musical careers through the following initiatives:

- Indigenous Music Manager based at MusicNSW
- Whichway Program
- Sydney Festival mentoring program and showcase
- Indigenous Quick Response Music grant program
- College of Country Music annual scholarship
- Support for the development of Gadigal Music recording studios and label
- Support for Gadigal Information Service's music performance opportunities.

New initiatives include:

- Groundswell Indigenous Music Touring Project to support NSW's Radical Son to tour the eastern seaboard of Australia in September 2009 in conjunction with Queensland and Victorian Aboriginal musicians
- Travel bursaries to festivals.

Arts NSW initiated the *2008 Sydney Festival Indigenous Partnership* to create unique development opportunities for NSW Indigenous artists and engage the broader Indigenous community in the festival.

Dance

Aboriginal dance development within NSW is centred on the long established National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) Dance College now located at Kariiong.

Since its inception, NAISDA has been the training ground for many Aboriginal performers who have gone on to have careers in the performing arts. Bangarra Dance Theatre grew from NAISDA. NAISDA is continuing to develop an outreach program including a partnership with Campbelltown Arts Centre and Aboriginal students from Campbelltown high schools.

Bangarra Dance Theatre is based in NSW but works throughout Australia and internationally as a major performing arts company.

In 2005, Ausdance National, in conjunction with the Australia Council, hosted a national dance symposium titled *Creating Pathways*, attended by many NSW Aboriginal dance professionals. A key outcome of this symposium was the establishment of a National Dance strategy by the Australia Council – *Treading the Pathways* – with the appointment of a three year National Dance Coordinator position based in Queensland to work with all states and territories.

Treading the Pathways incorporates *Spring Board*, a three year development program for seven contemporary choreographers. Of these seven choreographers, two originate from NSW.

There are also a number of Aboriginal dance troupes that provide cultural performances. The most well know are Descendance and Doonooch Dance Company.

Theatre

NSW currently has no Aboriginal managed and run theatre, unlike Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.

Over the last four years, Arts NSW has developed an *Indigenous Performing Arts Strategy* to utilise Arts NSW funding to broker relationships with other agencies. The Strategy supports key development programs that aim at building capacity within Aboriginal communities in the performing arts area. Initiatives supported include the Indigenous Performance Broker at Performance Space, *Gathering Ground*, a performance presented on site at The Block in Redfern, PACT Youth Theatre's *Step Up* program for young Aboriginal artists to work with established Aboriginal arts practitioners and support for the associate director at Company B.

The rise of actor-directors such as Wesley Enoch, Wayne Blair, Leah Purcell and Deborah Mailman continues to play an important role in inspiring many young Aboriginal performing artists.

Literature and History

Both the NSW Premier's Literary and History Awards have supported Aboriginal writers and historians. In addition to the awards, opportunities are available through *the NSW Writer's Fellowship*, the *NSW History Fellowship* and the *NSW Indigenous History Fellowship*. These awards and fellowships are administered by Arts NSW.

'GUWANYI' – (meaning 'to tell'), the *2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Writers' Festival*, was hosted by the NSW Writers Centre. *Celebrating the Voice 08*, the Indigenous Writers Tour was part of the program of the 2008 Sydney Writers Festival. *Indij Readers*, one of Australia's major publishers of Indigenous writers, has also received support from the Commonwealth Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) and Arts NSW.

Local Councils

Local councils operate museums and local libraries that hold collections of local and regional significance to Aboriginal people and the wider community. A number of local councils also run performing arts centres that provide support to Aboriginal theatre, dance and music.

A network of Regional Arts Development Officers (RADOs) supports local arts and cultural organisations in regional NSW, including Aboriginal arts and cultural organisations. Local councils and Arts NSW provide funding for the RADO network.

Peak Arts Sector Service Organisations

Arts NSW provides funding for peak service and advocacy organisations within the arts and cultural sector including:

- Museums and Galleries NSW (MGNSW);
- Regional Arts NSW (RANSW);
- Ausdance NSW;
- National Association of Visual Arts (NAVA); and
- MusicNSW.

The role of these peak organisations includes recognition, support and promotion for artists and arts and cultural organisations. Some of the peak organisations have developed specific programs supporting Aboriginal cultural expression, such as MusicNSW's Whichway program to assist the development of the Indigenous music industry in NSW. The peak organisations can also encourage communication and partnerships between Aboriginal arts and cultural organisations and the wider arts and cultural sectors.

RANSW supports a statewide network of Regional Arts Boards, which employ the RADOs. The regional arts network covers over 100 local government areas.

Community Cultural Engagement

Across government, many agencies and non-government organisations provide community cultural engagement programs for Aboriginal people in NSW. Social-based arts programs are supported by several NSW Government agencies to improve social well being and provide early intervention approaches to problems of disadvantage. These programs use arts practice to enable people to explore issues and build skills to improve social and economic opportunities. Arts-based programs delivered through agencies such as NSW Juvenile Justice and Corrective Services NSW are part of wider development programs for young offenders. Community Services' area assistance scheme has supported a number of Aboriginal arts-based projects to promote community well-being.

Arts NSW's current main Aboriginal community cultural engagement program is the *ConnectEd Arts* partnership with the NSW Department of Education and Training. The partnership began in 2004 and is providing arts camps and outreach programs for Aboriginal school students across the State.

Arts NSW also provides funds to organisations that use arts and culture in their community cultural engagement programs, including programs working with Aboriginal people in NSW. Some of these organisations also receive funding from the Australia Council. More information on the *ConnectEd Arts* partnership and community cultural engagement programs is in the section on Arts NSW Funding below.

In June 2009, the Premier announced reforms to NSW public sector agencies that include new groupings of agencies to improve services by reducing barriers between departments in delivering services to the community and ensuring a greater focus on clients. Under these reforms, Arts NSW and the state cultural institutions are now part of a new agency called Communities NSW. Communities NSW's role within government is to support the development of vibrant, sustainable and inclusive communities across NSW.

Communities NSW forms part of a Social Development grouping within the NSW Government that includes the Departments of Human Services, Health and Education and Training. (The Department of Human Services includes responsibility for Ageing, Disability and Home Care, Community Services, Housing, Juvenile Justice, Aboriginal Affairs and the Aboriginal Housing Office.)

National and NSW Funding Priorities

Joint Commonwealth and State Frameworks: Cultural Ministers Council

The Cultural Ministers Council (CMC) is a forum for policy development by Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers for the arts and culture.

Indigenous arts and culture has featured prominently within CMC over the last two years. Ministers have affirmed their commitment to supporting Indigenous arts as an expression of a dynamic and living culture and have acknowledged the role the arts play in enhancing economic and social outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

The CMC has released a *Framework for National Cooperation in the Arts and Culture* incorporating Indigenous arts and culture.

Recent action by the Commonwealth Government to support Indigenous arts and culture is consistent with the Framework including:

- Commitments to additional funding for the National Arts and Crafts Industry Support (NACIS) program, administered by the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts;
- The introduction of triennial funding for art centres;
- The introduction of a resale royalty scheme;
- The development of an industry-wide code of conduct to protect artists from unscrupulous conduct and enhance the industry's sustainability; and
- Ongoing development of the *Indigenous Intellectual Property Toolkit*.

In October 2009 Ministers endorsed the *Cultural Ministers Council Strategy*, which identifies opportunities for collaboration between jurisdictions. Indigenous arts and culture was incorporated into the key goal *Enriching our citizens' lives*.

Indigenous visual arts and Indigenous contemporary music remain the key focus of CMC.

In October 2009 Ministers endorsed an *Indigenous Australian Art Commercial Code of Conduct*. The voluntary code specifies a set of minimum standards for dealers, agents and artists, and defines terms of trade and rights and responsibilities for the sale and management of artworks.

Ministers also agreed to an *Indigenous Australian Art Charter of Principles for Publicly Funded Collecting Institutions*. The voluntary charter affirms the commitment of publicly funded collecting institutions to ethical best practice when dealing with Indigenous artists and their works of art, representatives and communities. It does so by setting out 15 principles of best practice which inform the acquisition, commissioning, display, loan and deaccessioning of Indigenous works of art.

The Code and Charter implement recommendations of the Senate Inquiry into Indigenous Visual Arts.

Ministers also agreed to engage Arts Law to implement the *Indigenous Intellectual Property Toolkit*. The toolkit will promote greater links between business and Indigenous communities on intellectual property issues. It will also raise greater awareness in Indigenous communities and with consumers and commercial operators of the need to protect intellectual property.

In 2009, under the national *Indigenous Contemporary Music Action Plan*, the CMC funded *Breakthrough*: the Emerging Indigenous Contemporary Musicians Initiative. *Breakthrough* is supporting five music acts to record and produce a commercial CD. Ministers agreed to support *Breakthrough* for a further year in 2010.

Arts NSW Funding

As part of Communities NSW, Arts NSW is working to:

- Strengthen opportunities for people across NSW to be involved in their communities;
- Promote the interests of specific population groups including children and young people, Aboriginal people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- Increase opportunities for participation in the arts and culture at all levels;
- Invest in facilities and community and cultural infrastructure; and
- Support enterprise and employment, particularly in the creative industries.

Arts NSW funds key arts organisations in NSW, manages a portfolio of properties used for cultural activities and advises the Government and arts sector on effective support for the arts.

We also encourage participation in and broader access to the arts and we support NSW artists and cultural organisations to create and present exciting and innovative work.

Our advice, projects, properties and funding programs support:

- Key arts organisations;
- NSW's major cultural institutions;
- Community and industry development;
- Social inclusion;
- Arts education;
- Strong and innovative arts practice; and
- Expressions of celebration.

The Arts Funding Program, administered by Arts NSW sets directions and priorities for support for the arts and cultural sector in NSW. The 2010 Arts Funding Program priorities are:

1. Audience development and participation;
2. Facilitating access; and
3. Industry capacity and sustainability.

Comprehensive guidelines on the Arts Funding Program are on the Arts NSW website: www.arts.nsw.gov.au

The Arts Funding Program also draws on policy directions for Aboriginal arts and culture developed in 2000 by the Indigenous Arts Reference Group, a former advisory committee to the Minister for the Arts.

In line with these policy directions and priorities, Arts NSW's Arts Funding Program provides annual program funding to Gadigal Information Service and the Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Keeping Place at Armidale. Bangarra Dance Theatre receives funding from Arts NSW's Major Performing Arts Fund.

Aboriginal arts and cultural organisations and mainstream arts organisations that support Aboriginal arts and cultural development are eligible to apply each year program and project funding under Arts NSW's Arts Funding Program. Programs and projects funded through the Arts Funding Program are expected to be accessible to Aboriginal people and communities as creators, participants and audiences.

Arts NSW's 2009 Arts Funding Program allocated over \$1.4 million for 43 Aboriginal arts and cultural projects and programs. This includes financial support from Arts NSW specifically to Aboriginal people and arts organisations from targeted Aboriginal strategic funding for infrastructure, professional development and arts and cultural programs.

Arts NSW's 2009 Indigenous arts strategic funding included:

- Continued support for the Troy Cassar-Daley Aboriginal Country Music Scholarship to the Australian College of Country Music;
- Support for the Whichway: NSW Indigenous Music and Artist Development program to deliver a series of three workshops covering the genres of Hip Hop, Country and Singer Songwriter; and
- The extension of two Contemporary Indigenous Art Curator positions in Western Sydney to mid 2010.

Western Sydney is one of the largest population centres of Indigenous people in Australia. Strategic funding in Western Sydney complements the existing development of the Indigenous visual arts and craft sector in this region.

ConnectEd Arts – a partnership between Arts NSW and the Department of Education and Training – is delivering quality arts programs to some of the State's most disadvantaged and remote schools.

With an annual budget of \$565,000, *ConnectEd Arts* provides a range of programs throughout the State including: arts camps for Indigenous students, performing arts touring programs, travel and ticket subsidies provided to performing arts centres and galleries to assist schools to attend performances and a range of outreach workshop programs.

Since the inception of *ConnectEd Arts* in 2004, over 80,000 students, 3,000 teachers, 1,800 schools and 400 artists and arts organisations have participated in the program.

From 2009-10, *ConnectEd Arts* also includes a four year schools residency initiative, the Artists in Schools program, which is a partnership between the Australia Council, Arts NSW and the NSW Department of Education and Training.

ConnectEd Arts is highlighted in the Productivity Commission's 2009 report for its contribution to overcoming Indigenous disadvantage.

The Arts Funding Program also provides funding to non-Aboriginal arts and cultural organisations that run programs and projects supporting Aboriginal arts and cultural development. These range from flagship organisations such as the Museum of Contemporary Art, Company B, Sydney Festival and the Sydney Writers' Festival to community cultural development organisations (such as Big hART and Beyond Empathy) that use arts and cultural practice to develop leadership skills and improve social and economic well-being in Aboriginal communities.

It is difficult to calculate the total of additional amounts from the Arts Funding Program spent on Aboriginal arts and culture through such multi-arts and non-Aboriginal organisations that Arts NSW funds. For example, the \$1.4 million for Aboriginal programs and projects in the 2009 Arts Funding Program does not include significant Aboriginal programs and projects offered by such key organisations as Performance Space, youth theatres and arts centres in Western Sydney.

Commonwealth Government Funding

Australia Council for the Arts – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board

The Commonwealth Government's Australia Council for the Arts supports Indigenous arts through its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board (ATSIAB) and through a range of other funding programs aimed at supporting individual artists and organisations.

As a statutory authority, the Australia Council is governed by an independent board and is advised by art form boards, which are the major source of advice on the development of the Council's arts policies and funding programs.

The Australia Council has six strategic priorities that apply to the whole arts and cultural sector in Australia:

1. Artists' income levels
2. Greater appreciation for the arts
3. Business and philanthropic involvement in the arts
4. Knowledge centre on the arts in Australia
5. Arts content for the digital era
6. National impact of the Australia Council.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board of the Australia Council (ATSIAB) assists indigenous people to "claim, control and enhance their cultural inheritance".³

³ www.australiacouncil.gov.au/about_us/artform_boards/aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_arts_board

ATSIAB has specific policy objectives to support Aboriginal arts and culture, encompassing:

- National oversight and strategic coordination;
- Arts development;
- Regional cultural development;
- Infrastructure;
- Industry development;
- Distribution, promotion and market development;
- Communication and strategic promotion;
- Copyright, intellectual property and moral rights;
- Broadcast media, multimedia and information technologies;
- Cultural heritage policy;
- Cultural heritage and cultural resource management; and
- Cultural and environmental tourism.

In 2008-09 the Australia Council provided \$9.7 million for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts across Australia from all its program areas. This included more than \$3.7 million from ATSIAB's specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander funding programs in the form of grants, residencies, an award for individual artists, financial and operational support to arts organisations, market and audience development initiatives and strategic initiatives to build capacity across the sector.

In addition, ATSIAB is currently undertaking the following strategic initiatives:

- Showcasing the Best International Strategy
- Artists in Work Employment Strategy
- The Other Side of the Coin
- The Celebrations festival strategy
- Music Bound - 'Turning up the volume on Indigenous Music!'
- Treading the Pathways
- Honouring Black Voices
- Making Solid Ground.

ATSIAB's November 2008 report *Making Solid Ground – Infrastructure and Key Organisations Review* has led to a new National Indigenous Arts Infrastructure Program.

Commonwealth Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

The Commonwealth Government's Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) administers a number of national arts and cultural funding programs, primarily focused on support for touring or regional arts.

National Arts and Crafts Industry Support:

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

To achieve these objectives, NACIS funding assists organisations to:

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

In 2008-09, the NACIS program supported 83 projects throughout Australia with funding of \$8.13 million. NACIS supported seven of these projects within NSW with funding of \$660,450. (Two of the seven are national projects conducted by Arts Law - \$50,000 and Viscopy - \$192,800).

For 2009-10 to 2011-12 NACIS is providing triennial funding to 13 organisations, including two in NSW (over \$75,000 pa to each organisation for three years). In addition, three NSW organisations are receiving annual funding from NACIS totalling over \$235,000 in 2009-10.

Indigenous Cultural Support:

The Indigenous Culture Support program (ICS – formerly the Regional Arts and Culture Support program) supports the maintenance of cultural practice within Indigenous communities and the promotion of Indigenous cultures as dynamic and integral elements of Australian culture and identity.

The program supports activities that:

- Foster, maintain and preserve regional and local Indigenous arts and cultures; and
- Support community participation in the process of cultural transmission.

In 2008-09, the ICS program supported 24 projects in NSW, with total funding of more than \$780,000, from a funding pool of more than \$6.7 million. In 2009-10 ICS is supporting 21 NSW projects, with total funding of more than \$880,000, from a funding pool of more than \$6.8 million.

Appendix 1: Policy Frameworks

Council of Australian Governments (COAG): Closing the Gap

Through COAG all levels of government have agreed to work in partnership with Aboriginal communities to close the gap of Aboriginal disadvantage by working towards the following challenging targets:

- Closing the 17 year life expectancy gap within a generation
- Halving the mortality gap for children under 5 within a decade
- Halving the gap in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade
- Halving the gap in unemployment outcomes within a decade
- Ensuring that four year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years
- Increasing the Year 12 (or equivalent) retention rate for Indigenous students to 90 per cent by 2020.

The Productivity Commission is producing regular reports to COAG that measure progress against these targets. Although COAG does not include specific targets for improvements in Aboriginal arts and cultural activity, professional development and infrastructure, the Productivity Commission's reports acknowledge the importance of Aboriginal arts and culture to closing the gap of Aboriginal disadvantage. Its report *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Key Indicators 2009* states:

The representation of culture in the framework has been a constant topic of discussion during consultations with Indigenous people. Culture pervades every aspect of the lives of Indigenous people, and some studies have suggested that cultural strength can provide communities with a degree of resilience to entrenched disadvantage ...⁴

The Productivity Commission's 2009 report includes examples of Aboriginal arts and cultural organisations and programs throughout Australia that are having social and economic benefits in addition to promoting excellence in arts practice. These benefits include:

- Increases in employment and Indigenous owned arts businesses;
- Encouraging safe and supportive communities through participation in organised arts and community group activities; and
- Improving governance and leadership within Aboriginal communities, organisations and businesses.

⁴ Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision 2009, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2009*, Productivity Commission, Canberra, p. 217

In November 2008 COAG asked that a strategy for overcoming Indigenous disadvantage in urban and regional areas be developed for consideration. This approach recognises that unless there are improvements in the wellbeing of the 75% of Indigenous people nationally who live in urban and regional areas, COAG will not reach its ambitious targets.

The 2009 Productivity Commission Report provides evidence for the view that improvements to the lives of Aboriginal people living in cities will be needed to meet Closing the Gap targets.

The *Urban and Regional Service Delivery Strategy* was endorsed by COAG at its 2 July 2009 meeting. The Strategy addresses the following priority areas:

- Integration and Governance
- Effective Services
- Focusing on Local Need/ Place Based Approaches
- Strengthening Capacity, Engagement and Participation
- Building Effective Accountability and Sustainability

The Aboriginal arts and cultural sector has the potential to contribute to all of these priorities. The Productivity Commission's report acknowledges this in its discussion of key indicators:

'Participation in organised sport, arts or community group activities' is included in the 'Safe and supportive communities' strategic area for action... The breadth of this indicator reflects the diversity of Indigenous culture. Art and ceremony are significant markers of a society's spiritual and cultural strength in both Western and Indigenous contexts, while there is strong anecdotal evidence that a range of sport and community activities can foster self-esteem, social interaction, and the development of skills and teamwork, leading to outcomes such as a reduction in juvenile crime.⁵

NSW

The main frameworks in NSW for community cultural engagement programs for Aboriginal people are the *State Plan* and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs' *Regional Action Plans* under NSW's *Two Ways Together* plan. These frameworks emphasise the importance of working across government and in partnership with Aboriginal organisations to improve social and economic support for Aboriginal people.

NSW State Plan:

In 2006 the Government introduced the *NSW State Plan* to guide policy development and measure the effectiveness of programs and services over ten years. The *State Plan* included priorities across NSW Government agencies to improve support for Aboriginal people.

⁵ Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision 2009, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2009*, Productivity Commission, Canberra, p. 218

The *2009 Review of the State Plan* retains a strong emphasis on improving support for Aboriginal people in NSW. This includes arts and cultural support such as:

- Extending arts experiences and opportunities for disadvantaged students and schools in regional and urban NSW through the *ConnectED Arts* partnership;
- Supporting locally initiated arts and community partnerships to build community capacity and resilience;
- Extending Government support for Aboriginal arts and cultural expression, including support for business development in Aboriginal creative industries; and
- Working with our museums galleries and theatres to give children a broad range of high-quality creative experiences.

Under the State Plan, the Government's work to strengthen Aboriginal communities also includes creating better employment opportunities with Job Compacts, increased training and more public sector jobs.

Two Ways Together and Regional Action Plans:

Consultation to develop Aboriginal Affairs NSW's *Regional Action Plans* under NSW's *Two Ways Together* highlighted number of recurring themes that are relevant to Aboriginal arts and culture in NSW. These include the role of arts and culture in increasing self-esteem, education results and economic opportunities.
