DETERMINING TRAINING AND EDUCATION NEEDS IN THE NSW INDIGENOUS VISUAL ARTS SECTOR

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF ABORIGINAL ARTISTS, ARTS AND CULTURAL WORKERS, AND ABORIGINAL ARTS ORGANISATIONS

1/13/2010

RESEARCH ON THE TRAINING NEEDS AND EDUCATION NEEDS OF ABORIGINAL ARTISTS, CREATIVE WORKERS AND ARTS ORGANISATIONS IN NEW SOUTH WALES
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Elizabeth Rogers
Chief Executive Officer
Regional Arts NSW
Preface

This research was undertaken between July 2009 and January 2010. During the first four months of research and field visits, many developments occurred changing some aspects of earlier findings on some regions. Further change in the regions is highly likely in the near future. While these changes are reflected in the section on recommendations, I believe it is necessary to keep the initial findings, particularly problems that were raised by respondents and the issues that I observed first hand. It is likely that this report is the only documented instance that such problems occurred. There had been surveys in the past, but no reports were published or made available to the public. As such, it is valuable for future research and benchmark for gauging progress.

I decided to keep these initial findings for another reason. I believe the problems identified by respondents are symptomatic of many things that could go wrong that everyone must be prepared for. For example, during my field research respondents had made negative comments on several TAFE. At the time of my writing this report, the relationship between two regions and their respective TAFEs have improved, while the relationship between two other regions and their respective TAFEs have grown progressively worse. Knowledge of these problems and the subsequent solutions to them will inform other regions to prevent similar problems from occurring or help several regions address current analogous issues.

Also, in the course of this research, I have accumulated a list of Aboriginal artists, which currently totals 306. This list is the result of my research using various sources that include the Dictionary of Australian Artists on line (College of Fine Arts UNSW), information from several RADOs, documents available in the public domain including the Internet, art catalogues, RANSW’s eBulletin, as well as through personal contacts. While Aboriginal artists listed are only partial, I believe this list provides the most up to date estimate in NSW at the time of publishing this report.

I have endeavored to be factually accurate in this current report. If there are factual errors they are my responsibility. The analyses are borne out of the information I have been given or have obtained from various sources. The views expressed where appropriate are by Regional Arts NSW.

All artworks on this report have been used with the permission of the artists.

Ruben Allas
Research Officer
18 January 2010
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A. Introduction

1. BACKGROUND

In a recent report to the Commonwealth government Regional Arts NSW identified several significant issues that impact on the sustainability and viability of NSW’s Aboriginal visual arts sector. The report *Identification of Engagement Opportunities in the Indigenous Arts Industry in NSW* points to policies, infrastructures, resources, as well as artistic skills and governance issues. This report proposed three sets of recommendations, with the first two sets focusing on resources, infrastructures and governance issues. The third was a specific set of recommendations for the West of the Darling region incorporating relevant resource-related requirements, policy changes, program delivery modifications, funding guidelines revisions and governance-related changes. It also incorporates specific strategies to address skills and training needs.

There are several initiatives that are being considered to address gaps in policies and resource deficiencies through the recommendations of *Securing the Future* (2008) report.¹ Governance issues of arts organisations are being responded to through the recommendations of *Open for Business* (2008) and *Making Solid Ground* (2008) reports.² Many of these initiatives were to be provided through various grants programs for professional mentoring, business advice, and brokering for capital resources by the State and Commonwealth government departments, such as Department of State and Regional Development (NSW), and

the Department of Education, Employment and Work Relations (Commonwealth), etc. Programs and infrastructure funding to help the development of Aboriginal visual arts organisations are provided through Arts NSW, Australian Council for the Arts, and the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (Commonwealth).

There are no comprehensive strategies or plans that focus on providing professional development to accomplished or emerging Aboriginal artists in NSW.

Developing Aboriginal artistic skills remains primarily the responsibility of individual Aboriginal artists. Some develop their latent artistic skills through fine art degrees. Several others improve their art skills through TAFE art classes. TAFE was a prominent provider of art classes to many Aborigines studying art, especially to those born immediately prior or after the WWII when it was extremely difficult for Aboriginal people to access tertiary institutions. Others were mentored by family members – fathers, mothers, uncles, aunties, grandfathers, grandmothers. There were also those who discovered their latent artistic inclinations through art therapy workshops run by not-for-profit organisations, such as the art courses ran by Centacare Wilcannia-Forbes in Lake Cargelligo in 2009.

Based on a research undertaken by Regional Arts NSW the variability of the development of Aboriginal art in regional NSW varies according to several

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3 Creative and cultural skills (June 2008), Creative Blueprint – The sector skills agreement for the creative and cultural industries provides a good model for the Aboriginal creative arts sector.
factors including – community cohesion, arts or cultural infrastructures, and access to professional development programs or resources. While these three factors are equally critical for the development of Aboriginal art, this project focused on the latter. It is an area where something can be done now without great amount of capital investment, and that programs can be developed initially to focus on individual artists. This research – funded by Arts NSW – is a follow up of relevant recommendations that aim to address issues with artistic skills development and resources issues identified in Regional Arts NSW (2009) report Identification of Engagement Opportunities in the Indigenous Arts Industry in NSW.

2. PROJECT AIMS

This research aims to determine training and educations of Aboriginal artists, cultural workers and art organisations. To achieve this objective it aims to identify the following:

- Outcomes from various art programs delivery models,
- Factors that affect variability of outcomes, and
- Best practice paradigms.

It will achieve these aims through the following steps:

- Survey of TAFE-run arts courses/programs for Aboriginal people;
- Research into non-TAFE arts program delivery;

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4 RANSW (2009), Identification of Engagement Opportunities in the Indigenous Arts Industry in NSW.
5 Refer to the report’s attachment “Printmakers and Wood Carvers of Wilcannia – The Darling of the West of Regional NSW (Pilot Project)”. Wilcannia represents one of the towns or regions that have the least amount of resources for social, economic and cultural development. It has one of the highest unemployment rates in NSW, one of the highest Aboriginal population ratios to total regional population, and experiencing high level of domestic violence.
6 TAFE will be primarily selected in terms of their proximity to major or significant ATSI population, location of ATSI artists or ATSI arts organisations.
• Determine the role of not-for-profit arts and non-arts organisations, including volunteers in the professional development of Aboriginal artists, cultural workers and art organisations;

• Identify the skills gained by Aboriginal participants attending TAFE and non-TAFE arts programs;

• Identify the skills, qualifications and attitudes by TAFE and non-TAFE arts instructors or coordinators; and

• Survey of non-TAFE and non-government resources to develop and promote arts in Aboriginal communities.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research relied primarily on field visits to the thirteen regions that are part of the Regional Arts NSW Network. Based on current knowledge, arts program delivery models fall into several categories shown in the diagram below.

• Artists-run initiatives (ARIs), e.g. 3 Rivers Aboriginal Art Space in Lismore (Northern Rivers);

• Private/commercial model, e.g. Boorlang Nangamai in Gerringong (Illawarra-Shoalhaven);

• TAFE-assisted, e.g. North-West pre-2008;

• RADO-assisted, e.g. Wilcannia Arts Centre in West of the Darling;

• (Papunya) College of Fine Arts, University of NSW - model; and

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7 See attached Map “Regional Arts Boards NSW”.
8 Refer to Regional Arts NSW (2009), Identification of Engagement Opportunities in Indigenous Arts Sector in NSW. Regional Arts NSW: Sydney, pages 33-38.
9 In an interview with three artists in Tamworth early 2009, respondents stated that arts courses ceased sometime in 2008 when participation dropped significantly.
Field visits included interviews with art teachers, staff and coordinators at TAFEs, directors and staff of regional art galleries, Aboriginal artists, Regional Arts Development Officers, and community arts organisations and commercial galleries. RADO interviews primarily involved discussions on of existing and possible resources for creative skills development to Aboriginal artists, e.g. access to infrastructure for the conduct of arts classes or courses, implementation of arts programs and provision of professional development activities. These resources also include gallery or exhibition space and shop front.

Interviews with directors and staff of regional art galleries provided surprising results. This research found that there are several galleries that have active strategies aimed at providing Aboriginal artists access to professional development programs, mentoring by professional gallery staff, and training on various operations of galleries.
Interviews were conducted with semi-structured informal questions. Questions addressed the following:

- where (who from) they learned their art
- what they do with their art work, and
- what they need to improve their art.

Variations to questions depended on rapport with interviewees, prior knowledge of the work of the respondent or of the artist (the Dictionary of Australian Artists on Line provided detailed information of sixty-two artists in NSW in its database and was used by this report), and the environment where the interviewed was conducted, e.g. other people were participating or attending the interviews.

Course coordinators, art teachers and cultural workers were asked the following:

- how many Aboriginal students are/were in their art classes,
- what are/were the attendance, completion, and attrition rates, and
- how do/did they rate their chances of making art their careers.

Variations or follow up to these questions include, asking about the 24 months, causes of low attendance or completion rates, causes of attrition rates, etc.

Respondents of new developed or designed programs/courses were asked about the reasons for developing these courses/programs, what will attract Aboriginal students to these courses, etc. For other respondents, e.g. art galleries, students are replaced with apprentice/trainee/artist, courses with training programs, etc.

Gallery respondents were also asked whether they have apprentice or mentorship programs, whether they have an active or articulated policy promoting Aboriginal art or artists.

As much as practicable or possible these interviews were undertaken in groups. Group interviews provided the most economic use of interview time, particularly in remote areas where gaining access to individual respondents is costly. Workshops
or group meetings were also conducted especially with inmates in adult prisons and juveniles residents at juvenile justice centres.

4. DEFINITIONS

- Artist

The inseparability of art from ordinary life in many remote Aboriginal areas in NSW, especially art works that make use of traditional iconographies, and the communal or participative nature of much of the art creation in these communities, make it imperative that the needs of the community should be considered, as well as the individual artist in determining training and education needs. It is for this reason that this research took on board the lists of Aboriginal artists provided by many RADOs as the estimated number of Aboriginal artists in each region.

We caution the use of these estimates outside the purposes of this report. The Regional Arts NSW list is only an indication of the number of people engaged in art creation and not a definitive list of artists for several reasons. During field visits of the regions, we found that ‘artists’ in many of the RADO lists included artisans (crafts practitioners) and producers of cultural items, e.g. boomerangs, spears, baskets, etc. Also, we have surveyed the needs of students, emerging and established artists whether they make a living out of art as their primary source of income or have day jobs. RANSW list of Aboriginal artists is supplemented by documented artists in the Dictionary of Australian Artists on line by the College of Fine Arts, UNSW, as well as information from research of art catalogues, journal articles, news features of exhibitions, and from informal sources.

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10 J.C. Altman, et al remark that it is difficult to put a precise estimate on the number of Aboriginal artists. However quoting 2001 ABS data the authors put the number of Aboriginal artists over 5,600 in the fine art sector, refer to page 7 in Some competition and consumer issues in the Indigenous visual arts industry.
Professional development\(^\text{11}\)

For the purposes of this report in keeping with the view that art creation in Aboriginal is essentially collective and participative, we have included the training requirements or education needs of students, artisans, cultural workers, and other creative workers in other sectors. This meant that we had to look into and asked respondents on art classes or training programs run by or at TAFE, Universities, community colleges, community organisations and other providers. We believe that by doing this, we would capture the needs of the community as well as the needs of individual Aboriginal artists.

5. SCHEDULE OF VISITS

Regional field visits were organised by RADOs. Most of the planned meetings occurred on schedule. The few that did not were more than compensated by many unplanned meetings. The following regions were visited in last six months of 2009:

- (Aug. 5-7) Illawarra-Shoalhaven and South East (Bega, Gerringong, Moruya and Wollongong),
- (Aug. 11-14) Orana and Far West (Bourke, Brewarrina, Dubbo and Walgett),
- (Aug. 18-21) Central West (Bathurst, Blayney, Condobolin, Cowra, etc.),
- (Sept. 8-12) Eastern Riverina and Griffith-Leeton (Griffith, Junee, and Wagga Wagga),
- (Oct. 12-14) Albury-Wodonga (Albury, Wodonga, Bethanga, etc.),
- (Nov. 16-2009) Northern Rivers (Alstonville, Byron Bay, Brunswick Head, Cabbage Tree Island, Casino, Evans Heads, Grafton, Lismore, Maclean, Ocean Shores, Tweed Valley, etc.)

\(^{11}\) For a comparative definition of professional development and attendant skills components of this definition, refer to Craft Australia (2006), National Craft Mapping Project – Service Provision for Professional Craft Artists and Designer/Makers.
6. RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Research on population, Aboriginal artists in each region, types of art courses/classes or programs delivered by various service providers, professional development provided by various agencies or institutions, etc. were undertaken during July 2009. This provided ideas on training or educations needs or issues for the interviews. During this period, RANSW coordinated with the RADOs in determining dates and times of interviews and visits. The assistance of RADOs were sought to identify TAFE in their regions for obtaining data on attendance, retention, attrition and completion rates to their arts programs. None of the TAFE interviewees during field visits provided empirical data.

A list of prospective interviewees was made during this early phase of the project. The number of interviewees and organisations changed during the field visits. Some were not available. This was compensated by other people that were available. This unexpected outcome provided information on other issues that were not considered in the formulation of questions for the interviewees, such as the role of small private and regional galleries in supporting emerging Aboriginal artists, the role of community colleges in providing professional development programs for artists, the role of artist-educators, etc.

7. UNEXPECTED RESEARCH OUTCOMES

There are several interesting unexpected outcomes from the visits to the regions. One is the discovery of more undocumented emerging artists in regional NSW.
Their names have been added to a growing database of Aboriginal artists at RANSW.

Another surprising result arose from visits to the Far West and Central West regions. Performance art and multi-media (small films and video) have been identified as areas of need. Based on interviews it appears that young Aborigines respond very well to performance and multi-media programs. Their participation rate to projects using these art forms has been observed to be high. Interviewees indicated this encouraged them to engage in other literacy programs.

The visit to Junee Correctional Facility (Wagga Wagga) provided interesting information on Aboriginal prison art. While this report is aware of the presence of Aboriginal prison art, it was not expected that Junee had a very active arts program. That it had a purpose-built art centre. That Aboriginal inmates were producing some of the technically better ones, evidenced by their being exhibited by Charles Sturt University gallery at their Wagga Wagga campus.
Determining Training and Education Needs in the NSW Indigenous Visual Arts Sector

B. Executive Summary

This research is funded by Arts NSW. Determining Training and Education Needs in the NSW Indigenous Visual Arts Sector aims to identify training and education needs of Aboriginal artists, cultural and arts workers, and Aboriginal arts organisations with significant involvement in the arts. This section presents the highlights of the results of a six-month research and field visits to nine RADO regions, comprising of more than 34 towns/shires/regional cities, and interviews of over 150 respondents representing more than 30 organisations and agencies, between July and December 2009. The major findings include:

- TAFE in general remains to be a good provider of basic training for Aboriginal students on art and those with long positive history with Aboriginal people, with Aboriginal teachers and coordinators, and with culturally sensitive senior staff work well with Aboriginal students;

- TAFE in several regions were unable to meet the needs of Aboriginal artists, Aboriginal art organisations, which in some cases were due to their focus on immediate employment outcomes, trade skills and the application of the Resource Allocation Model, and inflexible conduct of arts courses/classes;

- Aboriginal mentors, regional art galleries, and community colleges are increasingly performing a significant role in providing basic advanced professional development on Aboriginal arts to Aboriginal artists;

- Aboriginal mentors undertake the more important role of cultural knowledge transfer to new and emerging artists. Knowledge of creation stories, myths
and legends, and regional community and personal histories make Aboriginal art unique; and

- Some Universities offer advanced and specialised professional development opportunities for Aboriginal artists, especially artists that prefer to work and live in regional NSW. These opportunities will also address the needs of students that prefer to stay in their hometowns due to family or cost of tertiary education.

These highlights also include:

- Art in NSW is viewed by Aboriginal people and arts/cultural workers served community needs and perform numeracy and literacy development amongst Aboriginal students;

- Many technically advanced Aboriginal artists, including prison artists, are producing derivative art (Central or desert Aboriginal art). There is scant use of regional Aboriginal iconographies because of dissociation with culture amongst young Aborigines and lack of resources for research in regional NSW.

- New technologies are attracting young Aboriginal students to study arts or participate in arts-related activities, many in disadvantaged regional communities.

As a response to these findings, the following summary recommendations were formulated:

- Arts NSW work with TAFE to address at the policy level gaps or issues in their delivery of arts courses to Aboriginal students. Policy change will help ensure flexibility in the delivery of programs and courses that is cognizant of the specific situations and needs of Aboriginal students;
• Arts NSW provide incentives through purpose-specific grants or fellowships to support and recognize the role of community mentors in improving arts-specific technical skills, and cultural knowledge of emerging artists and in promoting the use of regional Aboriginal iconographies in their art work;

• Arts NSW provide specific grants for the study and research on regional creation stories, myths and legends, history, and culture, e.g. regional specific artifacts, in general that provide inspiration or ideas for Aboriginal art;

• Arts NSW formulate a policy to encourage and recognize NSW-specific Aboriginal art, i.e. use regional iconographies, creation stories, myths and legends, etc; and

• Arts NSW provide funds for projects that use new technologies by young Aboriginal students or artists.
C. Findings – General Issues

1. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VISUAL ARTS

While it is not possible to disaggregate visual arts - much more so the Aboriginal visual arts sub-sector - from the cultural and creative industries and accurately measure its significance, the following industry statistics shows some sense of its contribution. In 2004-2005 creative arts, which includes visual arts, contributed $520 million or 1.7 percent of the sector’s output. The sector’s contribution to the total Gross Domestic Product was $31.8 billion or four percent (4%). This rate is greater than agriculture, electricity or communication services sectors. The cultural and creative industries employed 276,000. NSW (36%) and Victoria (26%) have disproportionately high rates of employment in the sector compared to the other states and territories.12 The sector composes 8,791 enterprises in the creation process, 21,611 in the reproduction process, and 23,898 in the distribution of products and services.13

The Household Expenditure Survey 2003-2004 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that the total annual domestic expenditure on visual arts and crafts alone was worth $668 million. Commercial art galleries income for 2006-2007 was $131.8 million. If we were to estimate how much Aboriginal visual arts contribute to the total income of commercial galleries’ incomes from arts, the following indicates a sizeable ratio: in 1999-2000 value of art traded was

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$116.2; 20.8% percent was contributed by the sale of artworks by Aboriginal artists.\(^{14}\)

2. **VISUAL ARTS SECTOR**

The role of the visual arts in Aboriginal communities is indicated in the following:

“The arts ... are much more prevalent in Indigenous communities than in other parts of Australian society”, says the Myer Report.\(^{15}\) In Aboriginal communities much more so than the average Australian community, life and art comfortably weave into each other. In terms of its economic significance the Open for Business report states that “Indigenous commercial or competitive advantage is in culture-based industries.”\(^{16}\)

As a purveyor of economic opportunities its significance becomes more critical in communities where most people do not have the skills to be able to compete in the labour market for jobs. For example, towns like Wilcannia, which has an inordinate number of people doing arts, and where the unemployment rate is above 50% and nearly 100% of it is Aboriginal can benefit greatly from investment in the sector.

What is the Aboriginal visual arts sector? The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) includes in the visual arts the following art and craft forms: paintings, murals, drawings, cartoons, prints, photographic works of art, digital works of art, art installations, sculpture, ceramics, pottery, jewellery, woven or printed textiles art,

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clothing and wearable, carvings, furniture, glass craft, metal craft and leather craft, commercial photography services. This definition excludes newer art forms whereas the Canadian definition includes video, digital media and video, which are products of new technologies. Including newer art forms augurs well with the aim of this research as it expands the scope and areas of research.

3. **EXPANDED DEFINITION**

In this report, we adopted an expanded version of visual arts that includes performance arts, digital art, etc. for the following reasons. First, in many cases the discrete categories – traditional versus modern, painting versus photography do not do justice to the fact that many Aboriginal artists work with various art forms and engage in subsequent processes such as production or manufacturing and distribution of his or her art work. Looking at an artist as a singularity of art form or one process in the creative chain inhibits us from comprehensively looking at his or her training and education needs.

Second, by adopting this expanded definition we are including in our research other occupations that are considered auxiliary to the primary function of art creation. RANSW believe that adopting a more inclusive definition of visual arts encompassing traditional and modern visual art forms, as well as incorporating other creative occupations or professions outside the creative chain that provide support to the primary function of art creation or “… those activities that add value to cultural and creative works…” will provide more information on training needs of Aboriginal people, particularly artists. This broad definition will capture training

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19 By including sectors such as mass production or manufacturing and distribution of cultural or art products will expand the focus our research into training and education needs of artists and arts organisations, and consequently offer more opportunities for employment.
and education needs of those with very little or no qualifications or who are not interested in obtaining degree to advance their artistic career and not currently in the visual arts sector where Aboriginal people show practical excellence or where some of the arts-related skills could be more employable.\textsuperscript{21}

As a general guide, in addition to art creation, we have included in this research occupations in the following activities\textsuperscript{22} in the creative chain are considered in this research:

- Reproduction (or production), which includes services to printing, newspaper publishing, other periodical publishing, book and other publishing, recorded media manufacturing and publishing, computer consultancy services, sound recording studios, services to the arts, other recreation services, photographic film processing, and printing; and

- Distribution, which includes but not exclusively to all medium of distribution and retailing, antique and used good retailing, exhibition, radio services, libraries, museums, performing arts venues, video hire outlets, information storage and retrieval service, free to air television, pay television.

4. **VISUAL ARTS OCCUPATION CLUSTER**

The visual arts sector is composed of several occupation clusters that begin with the artist as the primary producer of art – painter, illustrator, sculptor, printmaker, ceramicist, weaver, etc. With a broader view of the visual arts sector, we looked into the training and education needs of professionals, technicians, trades, clerical/administrative workers, sales involved in manufacturing, production and distribution of art or cultural products/services. These occupations come under

\textsuperscript{21} Refer to \textit{Ibid}, page 41. Ten percent of activities are in the art creation and the ninety or so are distributed to production and distribution activities.

various industry or sector categories, including Arts and Recreation\(^\text{23}\) that have been excluded in ABS’s definitions.\(^\text{24}\) They include curatorial assistant, shop assistant, framers, production assistant/machinery operators, etc. In all cases, volunteer workers, which comprised 83.3% of the work force, in the creative chain are also included.

The following are occupation types in the cultural and creative industries that we have considered in this research, 36% of the national total is in NSW\(^\text{25}\):

- Architects
- Design workers
- Museum, library and heritage workers
- Arts teachers
- Visual arts and craft professionals
- Writers and journalists
- Performing artists and music composers
- Printing workers
- Equipment operators
- Performing arts support workers

They are distributed in the following occupation groups:

- Managers and administrators
- Professionals
- Associate professionals
- Tradespersons and related workers
- Advance clerical and service workers
- Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers
- Intermediate production and transport workers

\(^{23}\) Refer to ABS (2006), Catalogue No. 2064.0 – CDATA Online, Statistical Division by Occupation 06 (ANZSO) (OCC06P) and Industry of Employment (ANZSIC06) (IND06P).


• Elementary clerical, sales and service workers
• Labourers and related workers
• Other professions

There are also professions in the local government sector that are arts or culture-related that could provide additional options on professional development for Aboriginal people, such as cultural development officers, cultural planners or planning officers, including events coordinators. These positions can have significant influence over promoting Aboriginal arts and culture, and part-time or occasional employment for artists.

5. ABORIGINAL VISUAL ARTS SECTOR

The Aboriginal visual arts sector has potential to contribute to regional economies and the overall social and economic amelioration of Aboriginal communities in NSW.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census, there were 2,930 Aboriginal people employed in cultural occupations as their main source of income, which is 2.5 percent of all employed Indigenous Australians. There were 676 that work as visual artists and crafts professionals.26 Many of the artists surveyed by Regional Arts NSW during the first half of 2009 on a research project for the Department of Education, Employment and Work Relations indicates that most have other jobs. The number of artists that make a living out of art appears very small. For example, out of the twenty artists that exhibited in the Northern Rivers exhibition *Special Kind of Vision* in March 2009, only one artist earns income as a practicing artist. Others were either working in non-art related occupations or were on benefits. Few were dependents on their spouses.

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A report by Regional Arts NSW Identification of Engagement Opportunities in Indigenous Arts Industry in NSW indicates an under-resourced but very active Aboriginal cultural and creative arts sector. North-West has the highest number of ATSIs and some cultural and art infrastructures\(^{27}\). The eastern coastal regions from Northern Rivers down south to South East are hosts to a high number of Aboriginal artists and arts/cultural activities and government investment in the creative and cultural sector.

The table below provides an indication of the potential of Aboriginal visual arts in five select RADO regions\(^{28}\):

**Table 1: Aboriginal people in the Arts and Cultural Sector**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RADO Region</th>
<th>Artists</th>
<th>ATSIs</th>
<th>ATSIs Employed in Arts/Recreation Sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Rivers</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid North Coast</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West of Darling</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-S/South East</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total NSW</strong></td>
<td>306(^{29})</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>628</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State and Commonwealth governments have invested in several significant cultural and language projects in these regions. They also have ATSIs-specific paid-positions whose responsibilities include promoting Aboriginal arts. It is for these reasons that RANSW believes that these regions have potential to become business arts hubs that could provide opportunities for promoting regional development, particularly Northern Rivers, Mid North Coast, and Illawarra-

\(^{27}\) These cultural and art infrastructures include regional museums, art galleries, theatres, and open public spaces for various cultural and art activities.

\(^{28}\) Based on Appendix: Table “Omnibus List of Arts and Cultural Resources and Programs” in Regional Arts NSW (2009), Identification of Engagement Opportunities in Indigenous Arts Industry in NSW. RANSW: Sydney.

\(^{29}\) This estimate is current to the 14 January 2010, from RANSW artist database, and includes a high number of crafts people and 'artists' that have not produced consistently or exhibited at any major art exhibition.
Shoalhaven regions. These regions also represent several best practice models on promoting and developing Aboriginal creative arts in the state: Artists-run initiative, regional development focus, and private/commercial model.

6. **CHALLENGES OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY**

Professional development must take into account of new technologies as they impact on art creation, marketing/promotion, sales and distribution. While there is no available information on demand levels for any of these technologies from Aboriginal artists, the imperatives of the artists-as-entrepreneur model compel the artists develop relevant skills to be competitive. The following are brief descriptions of these changes and their influence over training requirements and education needs of Aboriginal artists. Equipped with these new technologies the artist becomes a competent entrepreneur or self-promoter.

- New technologies – digital technology and the Internet

Web standards\(^{30}\) (Web 2.0 is the current standard) that drive mobile phones, eBay, You Tube, Flicker, Facebook, and other participatory technologies have changed every aspect of human activity, including the creation and consumption of art. These standards are not merely technical innovations but also reflect new forms of expressing creativity and the influence of user-created content/relevance of products and services.

Prosumerism\(^{31}\), a concept coined by Alvin Toffler in the *Third Wave* (1980), and resuscitated by Don Tapscott a little over a decade ago in *The Digital Economy* (1995), captures much of the potential and implication of these developments for

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\(^{30}\) Read the following article on the emerging web standard Web 3.0 by Richard MacManus, “Understanding the New Web Era: Web 3.0, Linked Data, Semantic Web” in [http://www.readwriteweb.com/](http://www.readwriteweb.com/). The next standard will focus on data and more intelligent internet technologies. Web 2.0 the current standard focuses on user-generated content and social applications, such as Facebook, Flicker, YouTube, etc.

\(^{31}\) Refers to “consumers’ desire to participate directly in generating value from products and services and their preference for interactive experiences”, refer to The Conference Board of Canada (2008), *Valuing Culture: Measuring and Understanding Canada’s Creative Economy*, page 15.
Aboriginal visual arts. A Canadian study points to the following changes that are influencing the creative sector\textsuperscript{32}:

- Blurring the distinction between producer and consumer

Technology has changed consumption to the point where the consumer because of digital technology has more influence over the production of goods and services. Consumer taste and preference drive production and all the subsequent processes, including marketing or promotion, and financial transactions\textsuperscript{33}. This impact has been very significant in the creative economy, because in addition to participatory nature of new technologies the consumer is now

“… more articulate, more discerning, better educated, and richer than previous consumer, and … has higher expectations.”

The blurring of the binary roles of producers and consumers prompted much of the proliferation of interactive games, Facebook and other networking web-based applications, and perhaps explains the popularity of workshops as a means of delivering Aboriginal programs, e.g. basket-weaving, Aboriginal painting, Aboriginal cuisine, Aboriginal culture and history, etc. For the prosumer, it is no longer adequate to buy a women basket using traditional method but more importantly to experience creating one and taking it home.

- Comoditizing creative goods and services

Digitization is changing how many cultural goods and services are created and distributed. Many art works that once were too difficult to copy and distribute are now easily converted into digital form for any purpose, including design for commercial or industrial products. With digitization, high width broadband and digitization of commerce, artists can exhibit and sell their work anywhere in the world. Many Universities whose incomes depend largely on exported education

\textsuperscript{32} The Conference Board of Canada (2008), \textit{Valuing Culture: Measuring and Understanding Canada’s Creative Economy}, page 15.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, page 35.
programs have been using digital technology to deliver education materials and the internet to interact with overseas students.

Digitization facilitates the transformation of Aboriginal art into commercial designs. This is the strategy that Arts Mid North Coast adopted for the Aboriginal visual arts.34

- Developing new business models

Web standard has also made possible the distribution of goods and services easier and far-reaching through the cyber store, such as eBay. Attendant economic transactions, such as ordering and payment, are easily carried out through the internet and electronic funds transfer such as direct bank deposit, card payment, and other forms of secure electronic transfers. More importantly, digital technology affords the small enterprise to compete against large companies through the internet or web technology. It also cuts distribution costs and make the prices of goods and services affordable to many.

New businesses that use the internet are not constrained by the regular work hours. They are open online twenty four hours a day. Neither are they confined to the physical office to do business. Wireless internet technology enables them to work anywhere, with significantly reduced administrative costs.

Boolarng Nangamai in Gerringong is an example of an Aboriginal enterprise that has successfully utilised new technologies, such as the web for art sales, the digitization and web-based delivery of education programs to schools, and using interactive technology for the delivery and promotion of Aboriginal culture to various clients.

- Commoditizing creative experience

Participating in cultural activities experiencing cultures can be undertaken through the web. Commoditizing cultural experience can also occur in the real world

34 Refer to Arts Mid North Coast (2009), Foundations of our Future – Strategic Business Plan 2010-2012.
through workshops such as painting, dancing, basket weaving, wood carving or furniture making, sculpture, and cooking.

- Prosumers’ demographics
  On one end of the spectrum we find the ageing baby-boomers cashed up but are less physically active. On the other end, generation Y is cash poor, creative, techno-savvy and very active. Both groups find the new technologies serve many of their needs, such as socialization, recreation and leisure, education, banking, and work. These demographics are important considerations in marketing or promoting Aboriginal art.

- Cashed-up Baby boomers
  Born between 1946 and 1964, this population group enjoying the economic fruits of the previous several decades of growth has a very significant amount of disposable income. Most are at retiring age, very educated, and are inclined towards on-line shopping and social networking, and toward less physically demanding cultural and recreational pursuits such as visiting museums, art galleries, and the theatre. There are 664,000 of this population group in Australia and hold two-fifth ($2.5 trillion) of the national wealth, which was worth $6.02 trillion in 2008.

- Creative cash-poor Generation Y
  Born between 1974 and 1994, this age group constitutes 4.2 million of the Australian population. Not afraid of change, risk-takers and handles new situations very well, this group can be “responsive impulsive spenders”. They spend on cars and new technologies. Demand for online commerce in music, games, film and video is largely due to this group. This has been made possible by the internet and broadband. They are online 4 hours a day. It is expected

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that by 2015 broadband will contribute $20 billion to the economy. Generation Y will constitute a large share of the Australian workforce as more of the baby boomers retire.
D. Findings - Specific

1. DEMOGRAPHICS OF ARTIST POPULATION

For this report, Aboriginal artists that need training and further education can be categorized into three major groups: beginner, advanced, and accomplished. At this time, while it is difficult to put numbers into these categories, we have some anecdotal evidence of some of the characteristics of those currently attending or have previously attended TAFE:

That they generally fall between 16 and 70 years old\(^{38}\);

That, depending on the art form and compared with the number of non-Aboriginal men attending art classes, the number of Aboriginal men participating in art classes and other forms of training is relatively high or increasing\(^ {39} \);

That many older people have had some experience creating art prior to attending TAFE, especially those born before or immediately after WWII\(^ {40} \);

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\(^{38}\) Interviewees in South East and Illawarra-Shoalhaven indicate Aboriginal people attending TAFE generally fall in this age range, although Gerringong indicates that sometimes they get 8 year olds attending art workshops. Community organised art workshops in the Far West often get many under-16 such as 12, 13 and 14 years old.

\(^{39}\) For example, the tradition of basket weaving in Aboriginal communities is not exclusive to women. As a result, there are Aboriginal men that grew up learning weaving from their mothers, grandmothers, and grand aunties. Wood carving generally attracts men, but women are increasingly undertaking wood working workshops and classes. To date, stone carving artists are equally divided between the genders as it is with many art forms, based on the number of Aboriginal artists in RANSW database. Large works, however, are mostly undertaken by Aboriginal men.

\(^{40}\) Three out of five winners of the NSW Parliament Indigenous Art Prize – Esme Timbery, Milton Budge, and Danny Eastwood - were not schooled in the arts, but are self-taught, learned their creative skills or were inspired from cultural traditions handed down to them by their ancestors. Many in this age group were born
That older people with some experience creating art attend relatively advanced or specific art courses more than younger people\(^{41}\); and

That the needs of younger people attending or have attended TAFE are more basic (refer to page 37) than those by older people.

If we were to use the gender distribution of ATSI artists in the RANSW database, we can assume that the gender ratios of the artist population that may need professional development are nearly equal, as there are 131 women and 124 men.

Based on the artists’ proximity to available and accessible training and education providers such as Wilcannia (West Darling), Walgett (Far West) and Lake Cargelligo (Central West) and the lack of support from governments\(^ {42} \), we can also assume that those living and working in remote towns have higher level of needs\(^ {43} \) than those in rural urban and metropolitan areas (refer to I.

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\(^{41}\) This response came from several respondents to the research, especially in South East and Illawarra-Shoalhaven. In some areas like Lake Cargelligo and Wilcannia, many young emerging artists with some experience are participating in art workshops, either by TAFE or by community mentors.

\(^{42}\) Except for program funded by Regional Arts NSW in Wilcannia in the past three years, Aboriginal artists in Wilcannia, Walgett or Lake Cargelligo have not received any arts funding, at least from records of grants in the past two years from Arts NSW and Australia Council for the Arts.

\(^{43}\) In addition to lack of resources for arts programs, many remote communities do not have health centres, many live poorly maintained houses, and other social services.
Attachments – Maps 4 “Location of resources and concentration of ATSI artists in regional NSW”).

2. Skills Requirements

- Beginners

Some Aboriginal artists, especially those that do not or have not accessed Universities, start their art education in school. Others go through University. Many of that have gone through University have had experience in any of the art forms, for example Brook Andrew. Several learn from their parents and grandparents or lucky enough to be tutored by elders or their ancestors, such as the winners of the NSW Parliament Indigenous Art Prize winners Esme Timbery (2005), Milton Budge (2007), and Danny Eastwood (2008), as well as Graham King and Gordon Syron, winners of the Professional Development Category of the Prize in 2007 and 2008, respectively. There seems to be an inordinate number of Aborigines that are inclined towards the visual arts.

Interviews conducted in prisons indicate that an inordinate number of adult Aboriginal inmates have also keen visual memory, that without documents such as books, magazines, etc. as reminder they can draw from memory. For example, five out of sixteen Aboriginal inmates attending arts and cultural programs at the Junee Correctional Facility at the time of field research exhibited excellent technical art skills and visual memory of art works they have come across, from which their paintings are inspired. This also explains why much of prison art are derivative of Central or desert Aboriginal art because of their memory of Aboriginal art.

Many self-taught artists started their careers watching their elders (father, mother, uncle, aunts, etc.) create art, e.g. painting, weaving, sculpting, etc. For example, Laurie Robert of Evans Head used to hang around while his father’s (Oral Robert) paint, observing and asking questions. One day Oral gave him a canvas, brush and paint, and was told he could start painting. His
style still reflects his father’s, but he is developing his own with new works. He is also experimenting with shapes, colours, style, etc. He realizes that to further his artistic career he needs to learn more and indicated that he wants to take formal art classes in the future. Laurie’s story is replicated many times in many communities, particularly in remote NSW where access to art classes is very limited.

An example of beginners’ drawing class that he, and other Aboriginal artists, could access is listed below:

- Exploring the use of materials from charcoals, graphite, pastels to fine pen and ink
- Developing skills with line and proportion,
- Visualizing and composition,
- Introduction to tonal drawing and 3D form,
- Sketching techniques through to finished drawing, and
- Using mixed mediums.

Young Aboriginal people (16 to 21 years old) in school could access courses offered in many schools as early as middle childhood to early adolescence. While these courses do not attempt to provide a specialized area or focus, they introduce the student to many of the art forms and can provide plenty of opportunities to experiment or practice on some of them, something that the K10 syllabus can achieve. These courses address the technical aspect of the art.

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Beginning Aboriginal tertiary art students go through a more structured learning process that starts with art history, art concepts, and some practical experience in several art forms. Even those with advanced artistic, the academic and theoretical experience provide the students with artistic tools that in the long term help them get established, e.g. research, writing, digital media, multi-media. But much of the inspirational aspect of Aboriginal art making still redounds\(^{46}\) to knowledge of cultural tradition, collective and personal history (particularly with British colonialism), and access to relevant iconographies. The role of transferring this knowledge is performed significantly by community mentors. Many areas in regional NSW are not so fortunate to have resident accomplished artists as mentors. Cultural knowledge for other beginners is also provided by other sources, such as programs or activities facilitated by Regional Arts Development Officers.

The RADO in Far West, Sam Newstead, in collaboration with a curator, undertook research at Powerhouse Museum of regional artifacts from the region. Symbols from these artifacts are now being used at workshops with school students studying Aboriginal art in Bourke, Brewarrina and Walgett. The Dhariwaa Elders Group in Walgett has completed their research of regional-specific wooden weaponry artifacts being held by the Australian Museum. Photographs of these artifacts are on display at their premises for education and cultural programs. Likewise, Boolarng Nangamai artists have perused\(^{47}\) artifacts being held at the Museum of Sydney for some of their new works (wood), which are on permanent display at the Museum.

Art teachers, program coordinators justice centres, and art students interviewed for this research remarked that the Aboriginal cultural component of art teaching/learning is just as important in art creation. Juvenile justice centre

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\(^{46}\) An intransitive verb meaning to have a particular consequence.

\(^{47}\) A transitive verb meaning to read or examine in a careful and thorough way.
staff particularly indicated that culture could impact on juvenile rehabilitation as much as trade skills. Community mentors are deemed to play a significant role in imparting cultural knowledge, such as Les Elvin of Cessnock that mentors inmates in several prisons in the Upper Hunter region.

- **Advanced**
  These are skills required by artists enhance their art creation. They include advanced technical skills in the primary art form. Several emerging artist indicated that they would like to attend courses on three dimensional drawing, whereas technically advanced artists like those at Junee Correctional Facility stated that they would like to attend sessions on advanced drawing (shades, use of colour, dimensions, etc.) and painting (landscape, human form, etc.). Emerging artists are likely the most that will benefit from these activities. Below is a list of examples of advanced art courses offered by a private provider:\(^{48}\):

  - Study of tone, colour and composition
  - Still life objects and interiors
  - Life painting and portraits
  - Anatomy for the artists
  - Oil sketching and working with a model

- **Specific/Accomplished**
  These are skills that support artists’ primary art form, such as photography, ceramics, writing, public speaking, web design, digital media, multi-media, and curatorship. Many of these skills are provided by other artists and consultants. Artists also learn through collaboratively working with others.

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Artist residencies, fellowships and travel grants are available to accomplished artists to advance their careers in their primary art form or in other art forms. Residencies and fellowships often involve creating new individual works, collaborative work with other artists, networking with or learning from other artists. Some residencies and fellowships are undertaken overseas.

Many of these opportunities are offered by the Australian Council for the Arts. There are five grant categories for individual and group of artists and three categories for organisations. Individual or group of Indigenous artists can apply for any of the following:

- Residency (Albers Foundation)
- Skills and development
- Presentation and promotion

The Professional Development Award by the College of Fine Art of UNSW, which is competitively awarded like the five grants by Australia Council, provides another opportunity for Aboriginal artist to develop professionally. It is a good model for a short intensive two-week artist-in-residence program for accomplished artists to learn from or work with recognized artists in any art form. The award is also significant in terms of providing the artist an opportunity for a solo exhibition at the Ivan Dougherty Gallery of the University of NSW. Frances Belle-Parker from Northern Rivers and Graham King from Illawarra-Shoalhaven, previous winners of the Award chose to work with master print-maker Michael Kempson. Penny Evans from Northern Rivers - the 2009 Award winner - has also chosen to work with Kempson.

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50 The award is part of the NSW Parliament Indigenous Art Prize.
Demands for other art forms/crafts have increased over the past few years. For example, basket weaving apparently has been around for a long time.\textsuperscript{51} Demand for weaving workshops especially along the east coast has increased greatly in the past two years. One group that has contributed to higher demand was a group of weaver-artists of Boolarng Nangamai in Gerringong. Their baskets revived interest on the art/craft form from other Aboriginal communities, particularly along the east coast. Sharon Edwards, a weaver in Albury, could not cope with demands from non-Indigenous women for weaving workshops. Other art forms/craft that have been dormant could take off when it is picked up and made popular by others.

As to the non-art creation professional development needs for artists, the recent RANSW report “Identification of engagement opportunities in the Aboriginal arts industry in NSW” has identified the following Commonwealth and NSW State government service providers\textsuperscript{52}. Many respondents that have indicated the need for these services said that they have not come across any representatives from the agencies mentioned below:

- Department of Education Employment and Work Relations
  1. Indigenous Small Business Fund – provides grants for developing new and the expansion of existing business
  2. Indigenous Capital Assistance Scheme – brokers access to commercial sources of capital
  3. Emerging Indigenous Enterprise Initiative – provides grants to support economic development strategies

- Department State and Regional Development
  1. Aboriginal Mentor Program – offers individualized business mentoring

\textsuperscript{51} Jennifer Isaacs (1984), \textit{Australian Living Heritage}, published by Lansdowne Press: Sydney, NSW, indicates that basket weaving goes back thousands of years.
\textsuperscript{52} Page 43, RANSW (2009).
2. Aboriginal Business Growth Program – offers consultant to assist business plan and implement growth strategies
3. Aboriginal Business Link Program – brokers access to business trade exhibitions and shows
4. Budyari Ngalaya – brokers partnership with private sector
5. Indigenous Business Advisory Service – provides advice to start-up and existing businesses

- Department of Education
  1. Aboriginal Enterprise Development Officer Program – brokers assistance and support for new and existing businesses

- Department of Industry Innovation and Scientific Research
  1. Business Ready Program for Indigenous Tourism – provides access to mentors

Of the four agencies, DET through the Aboriginal Enterprise Development Officer Programs in Parkes and Upper Hunter have been very active in providing support to Aboriginal artists in terms of entrepreneurial issues, e.g. formulating business plans, financial management, brokering for contacts.

3. **Current Models of Arts Skills Development Programs**

The diagram following represents current models of arts-related skills development programs discovered through field visits in several NSW regions. There are six distinct models: TAFE, regional arts boards, universities, regional art galleries, correctional facilities, and community mentors. ‘Others’ represent community colleges, arts organisations, community organisations, not-for-profit
organisations, private-commercial galleries that are not yet numerically significant compared to the six models.

Diagram 2: Arts Skills Development Models

4. TAFE

Outside of the campuses in Sydney Metropolitan area (Sydney, Northern Sydney, South Western Sydney, Western, Western Sydney, Eora), there are TAFE campuses in regional NSW that provide Aboriginal arts programs – depending on resources, e.g. staff, funding, and level of attendance. These campuses include Armidale, Boogabilla and Moree in North West; Broken Hill in West Darling; Dubbo in Orana; Lake Cargelligo in Central West; Port Macquarie and Wauchope in Mid North Coast; and, Coomella in Eastern Riverina. For this report, eleven staff composed of art teachers and course or program coordinators that represented nine TAFE campuses were interviewed –
Albury-Wodonga, Bathurst, Bega/Moruya, Cowra, Dubbo, Griffith, Lake Cargelligo, Singleton, and Wagga Wagga.53

Not all TAFE have Aboriginal art-specific courses, but those do generally offer the following programs:

- Aboriginal Arts and Cultural Tourism Cert. III;
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts Cert I, II, III and IV; and
- Aboriginal Visual and Performing Arts Cert II and III.

ATSI Cultural Arts, a nationally recognized qualification, is delivered through several modules that include painting, printmaking, sculpture, arts management, textiles, Aboriginal culture and history, business enterprise, framing, traditional arts and decoration, music and performance. Students are expected to

“... gain knowledge and skills in the visual arts and crafts, music and performance industries that may lead to employment, or participation in community arts ventures, performance and/or self employment options.”54

TAFE also provides resources for programs to Aboriginals in prisons and juvenile justice centres, such for the Lincoln Centre/School of the Orana Juvenile Justice Centre in Dubbo and the Good Shepherd Centre in Wagga Wagga.

TAFE funds paid for instructors to conduct arts programs, as well as for the purchase of some materials, such paints, brushes, and canvasses.

For TAFE to be able to provide what it can appropriately delivery in terms of the needs of Aboriginal artists, arts students, and other Aboriginal students, it must address the following criticisms of its program contents, its model of delivery, and issues with staff qualifications and behaviours in some regions.

53 Information on Wilcannia TAFE was obtained from another research conducted in early 2009, which were updated through discussions with the RADO in West Darling in the last six months of 2009.
Racism of few staff in some campuses:

This particular criticism relates to Lake Cargelligo, Wilcannia and Moree. One campus that had good Aboriginal attendance (there were eleven students attending an art class at the time of field visit) was told by the regional TAFE to wind down its art classes because it had nothing to do with imparting numeracy and literacy skills to students. Apparently, the regional office subsequently forcibly removed pottery making tools and equipments. Respondents (course/program coordinator, art teacher, and students) construed the regional TAFE staff’s behaviours and attitudes as ‘racist’: they argued that art classes, in addition to providing its students art skills or improving the skills of artist-students, were being used as tools for...

An informant received complaints of racism at another campus. The criticism that apparently involved the use of the word ‘racist’ or ‘racism’ came late to this report and because of time constraints was not followed up. The information was taken on board for the purposes of reporting. By itself, with the knowledge that Aboriginal people do not make allegations of this nature lightly, the criticism is deemed important.

Irrelevant course components:

Criticisms that courses or some components of art courses/classes are irrelevant came from respondents from artists, an artist group, an art organisation, and former TAFE staff in the following regions – Illawarra-Shoalhaven and Eastern Riverina, and in some respect West Darling.

Artists indicated that they were restricted to drawing European figures and models. They wanted to practice drawing of Aboriginal figures and models instead. Also, they found the theoretical/academic components irrelevant. The group of artist was not allowed to deviate from prescribed practice. They had wanted to practice painting on specific mediums e.g. ceramics.
This report believes that there was a lack of recognition on the part of TAFE that the artists and the art group merely wanted to advance their skills in their chosen art forms or mediums, and that earning certificates is either secondary or irrelevant. Subsequently, these groups of respondents have now transferred to using regional colleges.

Inflexible delivery of arts courses:

This is the most common issue raised by respondents everywhere – particularly in Illawarra-Shoalhaven, Central West, and Eastern Riverina. Inflexibility issues involve TAFE’s lack of recognition of artists’ need for specific courses to meet their needs in particular art forms or mediums, formulating class schedules to address the needs of artists that have day jobs, and practical problems, e.g. landscape drawing requires outdoor scenes.

One art organisation in Illawarra-Shoalhaven with more than sixteen member-artists had wanted certificate courses for their artists. It wanted TAFE to design courses to meet specific requirement of artists to improve their artistic skills (their artists have already achieved certain level of professional competence and did not want to go through the standard course components) and schedule classes to enable those with work to attend. TAFE’s lack of willingness to modify its arts courses and schedules compelled this art organisation to access a small regional college instead.

In the Eastern Riverina TAFE’s insistence to apply/enforce the standard practices of art courses with several artists in the Eastern Riverina compelled their resorting to accessing the services of a small regional college to provide art courses instead. Artists wanted Aboriginal figures and samples to practice on, but were not allowed. For the same reason, inmates at the Junee Correctional Facility discontinued with TAFE and opted with a small regional college to provide them with art courses.
The most significant issue that relates to TAFE’s inflexibility is the strict compliance with the requirements or application of the Resource Allocation Method (RAM). This method applies the 20:1 student-teacher ratio to determine financial returns from a course. Courses that do not meet this ratio are deemed unprofitable, thus were discontinued. This was the justification for the Riverina TAFE regional office to discontinue art classes in the Lake Cargelligo sub-campus. It appears that trade specific skills programs, e.g. truck driving, that aim toward immediate employment outcomes are exempt from RAM.

The use of RAM for determining courses in remote regional NSW, particularly art classes disadvantage many Aboriginal communities. Often those attending or are interested in such classes do not have access to transportation (public or private), have seasonal or part-time work, are full-time home partners, or are looking after family members that are very young, sick or aged that they find it difficult to attend classes regularly.

This report however found that there are few TAFE that go against the trend. Albury-Wodonga TAFE has addressed this issue by combining different student levels into single sessions to meet the student-teacher ratio with more involved individual supervision. TAFE has a small bus that transports students to and from campus as well as for arts-related trips. In addition, it has allowed home studies for some with supervised home visits by art teachers.

Inappropriate teaching method:

Art classes are undertaken mostly indoors. Certain aspects of arts programs are best taught or learned outdoors, such as landscape painting or drawing sceneries. TAFE in West Darling and North West\(^\text{55}\) disallowed outdoor landscape painting or scenery drawing. The justification provided at least by the sub-campus in Wilcannia was occupation, health and safety and public

\(^{55}\) Information on TAFE from West Darling and North West was obtained from raw data for another report by Regional Arts NSW (2009), Identification of Engagement Opportunities in the Indigenous Arts Industry in NSW.
liability. Instead students were asked to paint from photographs and magazines. This problem was primarily responsible for low attendance in Tamworth and aggravated trust-behaviour issues with the coordinator of the sub-campus in Wilcannia.

As a result of this problem, at the time of field visit in Tamworth in early 2009, no Aboriginal student was attending TAFE art courses (another problem associated with the lack of Aboriginal enrolment was the transfer of the Director, who was considered culturally sensitive to Aboriginal issues, to another region). The art instructor at the Wilcannia sub-campus was creative enough and found ways to conduct outdoor landscape painting.

Culturally-sensitive art teachers/course program coordinators/Administrators:

These are several factors that significantly contribute to the promotion of art courses to Aboriginal people. Administrators with good understanding of Aboriginal needs promote certainly flexibility in the delivery of programs. Aboriginal teachers, coordinators that teach students and culturally-sensitive staffs that provide support to them contribute valued add to teaching and support by undertaking unpaid outreach work to ensure compliance with school requirements, e.g. attendance, work assignment.

TAFE Tamworth before 2009 apparently had a good working relationship with the Director that was partly responsible for keeping arts classes despite low attendance rate. The Dubbo campus had reasonable attendance when it had an Aboriginal coordinator that worked well with the program coordinator. TAFE sub-campus in Wilcannia had a culturally-sensitive non-Aboriginal art teacher that motivated Aboriginal students. Wollongong TAFE has a long positive history with Aboriginal students. Despite its problems with the Riverina regional TAFE office, the Lake Cargelligo sub-campus has good attendance rate because it has an Aboriginal coordinator that promotes the welfare of students and exercised some flexibility in delivering art courses. Albury-
Wodonga TAFE is one of the campuses fortunate enough to have employed culturally sensitive administration and Aboriginal staff. Apparently it has top management support that it built the Eddie Kookaburra Kneebone Aboriginal Art Gallery to showcase the works of its Aboriginal student.

When these people leave, resign or transfer and without comparable replacement meant the loss of flexibility, cessation of the value added support and diminution of resources. The introduction of the Resource Allocation Model and the focus on immediate employment outcomes do not help create an environment within TAFE to be creative in developing or designing courses on non-trade related skills. Consequently, the delivery of courses becomes inflexible and less resources to courses such as art that do not immediately produce employment outcomes. Without the value added assistance from Aboriginal teachers and coordinators, TAFE becomes less friendly to Aboriginal artists or students.

Consequently, respondents in Tamworth indicated that they found the replacement Director less understanding of Aboriginal needs that they lost interest in working with TAFE. At the time of field visit, TAFE did not have Aboriginal art students. The Aboriginal art course coordinator at Dubbo TAFE resigned in early 2009 and at the time of field visit in middle-2009, TAFE had not found a replacement. There were no Aboriginal art students. Broken Hill TAFE that is responsible for the sub-campus in Wilcannia is withdrawing funding to art classes. Likewise, Riverina TAFE that is responsible for the sub-campus is terminating art courses in Lake Cargelligo, which has a comparable good attendance rate like Albury-Wodonga.

TAFE in Wollongong and Wagga Wagga that have top management support for Aboriginal programs are working with the University of Wollongong and Charles Sturt University to design bridging courses to enable TAFE students to move onto University studies.
5. Universities

There are several universities that offer professional development to external clients. Universities provide the most comprehensive arts courses. They are usually delivered through Faculties or School of Arts and come under the degree ‘Fine Arts’ at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. Several have ATSI specific courses on Aboriginal arts and culture that are essentially academic, but particular art forms or medium development depends on individual artists and the arts faculties or schools of these institutions. Three surveyed were University of Wollongong, University of NSW and Charles Sturt University, for they have documented involvement with, interest in ATSI creative arts sectors or significant presence in regional NSW.

The following degree courses, with variations although not significant in terms of contents and delivery, are examples of what are currently offered in many tertiary institutions:

- Associate degree in Visual Arts and Design,
- Bachelor in Creative Arts and Culture, and
- Master of Visual Arts and Culture.

In addition, the following tertiary institutions have specific arrangements or programs that promote the professional development of practicing and emerging Aboriginal artists in some regions of NSW:

**University of NSW:**

The third set of recommendations of Identification of Engagement Opportunities in the Indigenous Arts Industry in NSW identifies the College of

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56 Refer to Appendix – Map 4 “Locations of training for areas with significant number of Aboriginal artists”.
57 These courses are offered by the Australian Catholic University.
58 “Printmakers and Woodcarvers of Wilcannia – The Darling of the West of Regional NSW (Pilot Project), Appendix: Recommendations, Identification of Engagement Opportunities in the Indigenous Arts Industry in NSW, by Regional Arts NSW, June 2009.”
Fine Arts (CoFA) of the University of New South Wales as an option for developing or up-skilling of Aboriginal artists in Wilcannia. The University has a facility north-east of Wilcannia at Fowler’s Gap where post-graduate students at CoFA undertake practicum. It has two campuses in Sydney – one in Kensington and the other is in Darlinghurst, where the College of Fine Arts is based. This proposal is based on CoFA’s current arrangement with Aboriginal artists in Central Australia. It is currently working with Papunya artists. Through this agreement CoFA provides arts advisors and leases print-making equipments. Print-making is one of CoFA’s specialty art forms, having a well-equipped and staffed by an accomplished print-maker, and currently the skills most used by those attending the artist-in-residence program under Badger Bates.

West Darling Arts and Regional Arts NSW are discussing with CoFA for the latter to provide similar services to Aboriginal artists in Wilcannia. West Darling Arts is also currently looking for funds to help set up the Wilcannia Art Centre to host any program that will come out from discussions with CoFA. With the expected winding down of Broken Hill TAFE arts programs in Wilcannia, this agreement and any infrastructure support can help advance Aboriginal arts in the region.

CoFA is also a significant contributor to the NSW Parliament Indigenous Arts Prize through the Professional Development Award Prize every year. The award provides the winning artist a two-week residency and access to University arts professionals and facilities at their Paddington campus. Artists works produced during this residency are exhibited at any of the University’s galleries.

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59 The author of this report facilitated and attended the first meeting between West Darling Arts and the College of Fine Arts UNSW. He also consulted with Prof. Vivienne Johnson that worked and project managed the CoFA arrangement with the Papunya artists, which the planned arrangement with Wilcannia is patterned after.
Charles Sturt University:

The university has several campuses in regional NSW – Bathurst and Orange in Central West, Dubbo in Orana and Wagga Wagga in Eastern Riverina. Charles Sturt University is presently supporting Aboriginal prison-artists by exhibiting their works at the Wagga Wagga campus gallery. The first was held in 2008 where works by the Junee Correctional Facility inmates were exhibited at the gallery. The University has made a request to the artists for a second exhibition.

The School of Visual and Performing Arts at the Wagga Wagga campus is pursuing an active program to promote visual and performing arts as another pathway to professional development for Aboriginal artists. Central West RADO and Regional Arts NSW have made initial contacts with the head of the School and a senior lecturer at the Bathurst campus. Discussions indicate a very strong degree of willingness on the part of the University to encourage Aboriginal artists to enroll at the School and in visual and performing arts degree courses, especially Aboriginal students who would rather study in regional NSW. The School has specialist interest in film-making, animation and digital media.

Also, CSU has partnered with Wagga Wagga TAFE in offering tertiary subjects to students enrolled at TAFE courses. Through this process TAFE students gain experience with more structured learning. The partnership provides another pathway to TAFE students.

In addition to willingness and capacity for excellence in visual and performing arts degree courses, Charles Sturt University is one of the few tertiary institutions that have an Indigenous Education Strategy and an Indigenous Studies Centre (Dubbo) dedicated to delivering tertiary education to Indigenous people. The Centre is working for embedding Indigenous content in
tertiary subjects and courses.\textsuperscript{60} It has plans to make a subject on Indigenous issues a compulsory subject for all students, as well as plans to recruit ATSI academics for the Centre and for subjects it deemed requiring ATSI specialized knowledge. The evolving culturally-sensitive environment at CSU will impact on its ability to provide training and education for the Aboriginal creative arts sector in NSW.

University of Wollongong:

University of Wollongong has several campuses – the main is situated in Wollongong. It has a presence in Shoalhaven (Batemans Bay) and the Southeast (Bega). Like Charles Sturt University, it has an Indigenous Unit. The Woolyungah Indigenous Studies Centre is currently working on a strategy with Wollongong TAFE to design a program the will provide bridging courses for Aboriginal students enrolled at TAFE for admission into the University courses. With such a program TAFE students are provided more pathways to University education as the program will introduce TAFE students to the methods and structures of University education. Charles Sturt University is planning to do similar program for Aboriginal students with the Wagga Wagga TAFE.

University of Wollongong can service professional development needs of artists in the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and the South Coast. Recently, the Centre participated with fifteen Aboriginal artists in the Illawarra-Shoalhaven and the South Coast to showcase Aboriginal art at the Wollongong City Gallery.\textsuperscript{61}

Two other universities with presence in regional NSW that this report is aware of are Southern Cross and New England. There is potential for Southern Cross University (SCU) as a resource for Aboriginal artists, especially in the Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast. It has campuses in Tweed Valley, Lismore and Coffs Harbour. The Indigenous Arts Development Officer with the Arts Northern Rivers completed a honours in visual arts and master’s degree in Aboriginal

\textsuperscript{60} Charles Sturt University, \textit{Indigenous Education Strategy}, page 6.
\textsuperscript{61} The Pallingjang Saltwater 2009 was launched in 5 December 2009 at the Wollongong City Gallery.
studies at SCU. She also completed a fine arts degree at the CoFA. University of New England has campuses in Armidale and Tamworth.

6. COMMUNITY MENTORS

Community mentoring has always played a significant role in training young Aboriginals develop art skills but more importantly in imparting cultural knowledge – of creation stories, laws, traditions and spirituality, which are the ingredients that make Aboriginal art unique.

There are three regions visited that have significant community mentoring activities – Wilcannia in West Darling, Lismore in Northern Rivers, and Kempsey in Mid North Coast. Although less developed mentoring initiatives are evolving in the Lake Cargelligo and Murrin Bridge in Central West, and through individual accomplished Aboriginal artists in Blayney (Central West) Moruya (South Coast), Gerringong (Illawarra), and Albury (Albury-Wodonga).

Badger Bates, with West Darling Arts and funded by Regional Arts NSW, is mentoring emerging Aboriginal artist on printing-making, painting, drawing, sculpture, etc. in Wilcannia. Wilcannia print makers have recently exhibited their works at a Sydney gallery. A more organised and involving several accomplished Aboriginal artist-mentors, Northern Rivers is supporting through funds and administrative assistance Garth Lena, Digby Moran, Les Evans, Michael Davis and Oral Robert mentor young Aboriginals on art and Aboriginal culture. Les Elvin of Cessnock on his own and with his personal resource is mentoring Aboriginal inmates of Cessnock prison. He also works with emerging artist Craig Layer and teaches several young Aborigines Aboriginal culture and art in and around Cessnock. Milton Budge has been

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62 Organised by West Darling Arts, works by several Wilcannia print-makers were exhibited at the Hazlehurst Gallery in Sydney.
mentoring emerging artists in Kempsey such as Natalie Bateman in the past several years.

Basket weavers from Gerringong are conducting workshops throughout NSW, which in the past twelve months included Broken Hill, Northern Rivers, Mid North Coast, and Central Australia with the Papunya artists. Sharon Edwards, a basket weaver in Albury is also mentoring others on basket weaving in Albury-Wodonga in the same way as the West Women Weavers in Condobolin are doing in Central West.

7. REGIONAL ARTS ADVISORY BORADS

There are thirteen regional arts advisory boards throughout NSW.63 Part of their functions, through the thirteen Regional Arts Development Officers, involves organising art exhibitions, convening art workshops, and generally promoting Aboriginal art. Two regions have dedicated Aboriginal staffs – Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast – that focus on Aboriginal art and artists. Of the thirteen regions, Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast have the highest number of Aboriginal arts and cultural activities64 and resources.65 They include exhibitions, festivals, participation in local and regional art fairs and fairs in general. Northern Rivers particularly has the highest number of active and documented Aboriginal artists. Mid North Coast has recently developed a new course with TAFE – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Design and Licensing Program, Certificate IV.

Arts advisory boards also broker for professional development programs for Aboriginal artists. West Darling Arts initiated in 2006 the Wilcannia Artist in Residence Program. It ran for three years until 2008. The program aimed to

63 Refer to Attachment: Map 6 “Regional Arts Advisory Boards”.
64 See Attachment: Map 2 “Level of arts-related activities involving Aboriginal artists based on recent activities, planned events and resource acquisitions”.
65 Refer to Attachment: Table “Arts Funding in NSW”.
promote the professional development of artists in Wilcannia, many of whom are Aboriginals, through workshops with resident-artists. Over the course of three years 795 individual participants were taught painting, sculpture, print-making, weaving, and worked with fabrics. Their works were exhibited mainly in Broken Hill.66 Currently, West Darling Arts is supporting Badger Bates mentor emerging Aboriginal artists in Wilcannia. The program will run for twelve months. Several artists from Wilcannia, many of whom had participated in the artist-in-residence program and currently being mentored by Badger Bates, have recently exhibited their lino prints at the Hazlehurst Gallery in Sydney.

Arts Northern Rivers has a strong focus on the professional development of Aboriginal artists through organised its own organised art exhibitions, encouragement of Aboriginal artists participation in art exhibitions organised by others, art sales in art fairs and markets, and brokering for marketing of Aboriginal art in private commercial galleries. Some of the exhibitions it organised include A Special Kind of Vision in early 2009 and recently Men's Business in Ballina from December 2009 to January 2010. Some of the Northern Rivers artists have participated in the NSW Parliament Indigenous Art Prize and recently the Clarence Valley Indigenous Art Award at the Grafton Regional Gallery from October to December 2009.

Arts Advisory Boards also broker to acquire resources for community projects. Outback Arts in partnership with the Powerhouse Museum undertook research on the Museum’s collection of artifacts from the Far West region. The aim was to search for regional-specific symbols and iconographies to incorporate in Aboriginal art workshops in Bourke, Brewarrina and Walgett areas. This was to motivate Aboriginal artist to use local or regional iconographies in art.

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8. REGIONAL ART GALLERIES

There are thirty three regional art galleries in NSW. Excluding eleven in metropolitan Sydney, regional NSW has twenty. Some regions have two or three galleries such as North West (Tamworth, Armidale and Moree), but most have one. The following were visited for this report – Albury, Bathurst, Griffith, Muswellbrook and Wagga Wagga. Broken Hill was visited in early 2009 for another report.

Other forms of training or education are provided by regional art galleries. Training, apprenticeships and mentoring provided by these galleries are not focused on earning a qualification but the development of practical skills in curatorship and operations of galleries. Some local governments in metropolitan Sydney have large well-organised, adequately-funded art galleries, e.g. Campbelltown and Liverpool in Western Sydney.

At the time of field visit, the Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery had a young Aboriginal trainee undertaking gallery work. The Griffith Regional Art Gallery guided by the Griffith Community Action Plan is actively promoting Aboriginal art through exhibitions and workshops and during the regional visit was supporting an Aboriginal artist’s training on curatorial skills in Sydney. Wagga Wagga Regional Art Gallery has new Director who has particular interest in Aboriginal art and arts by Indigenous peoples overseas and was very keen to exhibit Aboriginal artists from the region.

9. PRISON/JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTRES

There are twenty-nine correctional centres and one privately operated centre in NSW. Department of Human Services operates nine juvenile justice centres –
four in regional NSW (Wagga Wagga, Grafton, Dubbo, and Gosford) and five in metropolitan Sydney (2 in Penrith, Lidcome, and Campbelltown). The following adult prisons were visited for this report – Bathurst and Junee – and the Wagga Wagga and the Dubbo juvenile justice centres. Most of the juvenile justice centres have arts classes, but actual running of these classes depended on resources and number of willing participants, as participation was voluntary. But the most fundamental problem was resources, as respondents indicated that juvenile would participate in almost anything they are offered, rather than confined to their rooms.

The Girrawaa Creative Work Centre at Bathurst Jail was designed to provide art training and art-related trade skills to Aboriginal inmates. At the time of field visit their art program consists of painting for income (painting dots on blank boomerangs) and painting for art. The latter they do after completing some work on boomerangs. The art they do after working on boomerangs include ceramics, wood carving and draing. Arts-related skills consisted of training on making picture frames, from which the inmates also generate incomes. Art is mostly derivate of central and desert art. The number of inmates that participate in the program apparently varied. At the time of field visit, we were informed that between ten and twelve were attending workshops.

Junee Correctional Facility, the only private operated prison, has a cultural centre where they conduct art classes that at the time of field visit had sixteen Aboriginal inmates taking art classes. About five of these inmates had advanced technical skills in painting and had already exhibited at the art gallery of the Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga. They were about to commence art classes with a regional community college art teacher after terminating the services of TAFE. The five with advanced skills were producing derivate art.
Of the two juvenile justice centres Orana through the Lincoln Education Unit had an organised art classes for the eight Aboriginal juveniles at the time of field visit\(^6^8\). They were working on photographs of themselves and manipulating images through Photoshop software. The TAFE art teacher indicated that he had wanted to incorporate Aboriginal culture as part of the art classes but did not have resources. The Riverina centre did not have any art classes at the time and the juveniles were allowed use of computers. Likewise, staff indicated that they had wanted to include Aboriginal culture in programs for the juveniles but did not have resources.

10. **NOT FOR PROFIT ORGANISATIONS**

There are not-for-profit organisations that offer art classes to Aboriginal people. They include church organisations, land councils, charitable organisations, community health services, family support services, neighborhood centres, etc.\(^6^9\) In many cases, these programs complement their core businesses. For example, Centacare Wilcannia-Forbes’ primary mission is to provide support to disadvantaged families. It developed the Three Rivers Art Project in Lake Cargelligo as part of its work with women with mental health problems and used art

“… to help facilitate the building of capacity for social and emotional well being in Aboriginal families and communities.”\(^7^0\)

While art is used to as a therapeutic tool, the quality of art was very good that several of the participants in the project have been invited to exhibit by a large art gallery in Sydney. Many of the work were sold at the Lake Cargelligo launch/exhibition. The program has contributed to an evolving

\(^{6^8}\) Orana Juvenile Justice Centre (2009), Lincoln Education and Training Unit – Provision for Aboriginal Offenders Workshop 2009.

\(^{6^9}\) See DEWHA (2009), National Arts and Craft Industry Support funding and Indigenous Culture Support Program funding 2009-2010.

\(^{7^0}\) Centacare (2009), Centacare Wilcannia – Forbes: Three Rivers Art Project.
Aboriginal art hub in the Lachlan Valley, connecting artists in Lake Cargelligo, Peak Hill and Murrin Bridge. It is likely that Lake Cargelligo will provide the centre of arts activities as more artists live and art creation occurs in the area and where comparatively more social and community services are located, including TAFE. Centacare has withdrawn resources for the project. The reasonably high degree of art activities is currently sustained by volunteer work by an artist in Parkes. Outback Arts (Central West) is formulating a strategy to help keep the level of art creation in Lake Cargelligo, Peak Hill and Murrin Bridge.

11. LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Local governments through their regional art galleries help provide directions on Aboriginal creative arts issues through their social plans, community action plans, or cultural development plans. This sector is largely untapped for providing traineeships, apprenticeships or mentoring for Aboriginal people. Partnerships with councils and shires to provide traineeships apprenticeships in the area of cultural development and promotion of Aboriginal art could facilitate Aboriginal long-term employment as cultural officers, cultural planners, and events coordinators. Some of the larger councils, like Griffith City Council, have formal policies that provide Aboriginal people access to these opportunities.\textsuperscript{71} The Campbelltown City Council has an Aboriginal project officer working at the Campbelltown Art Centre whose main focus is the promotion of Aboriginal art in the region. The Northern Regional Library in Moree is currently undertaking an expansion to include the Dhiiyaan Indigenous Knowledge Centre to focus primarily on collecting, preserving and promoting Aboriginal culture and history\textsuperscript{72}. It is for this reason that this report advocates


\textsuperscript{72} Refer to the Northern Regional Library (2009), Business Plan for the Dhiiyaan Indigenous Centre. NRL: Moree.
working with Museum and Galleries NSW Association to promote Aboriginal art in regional NSW.

12. **Regional Colleges**

These are smaller adult education providers, mostly in regional areas, like Adult Community Education in Northern Rivers. Many Aboriginal organisations in the Northern Rivers region have been with them for quite some time. In some areas, such as Gerringong, Wagga Wagga and Junee these small regional colleges are replacing TAFE as providers of arts classes. Artists and cultural workers in these regions indicated that they are more flexible in their delivery of courses.
E. Recommendations - General

The following recommendations focus on the needs of the following Aboriginal population groups – practicing artists at various levels of technical skills, emerging artists skilling up on their art form or learning other art forms, students studying Aboriginal art for various reasons, and community art groups that use art for social, health, and cultural education purposes. Many of the changes proposed in this section will affect Aboriginal artists in remote and regional NSW, where professional development resources for the arts are non-existent or inadequate for most of their needs.

1. REGIONAL ICONOGRAPHIES

The association of Australian desert traditional iconographies as Aboriginal art unfortunately has worked against Aboriginal art in other regions of Australia. Because of this association regional traditional iconographies are considered less authentic representations of Aboriginal art. Many emerging artists indicated that they do it for the following reasons. Some were told that dots are the only Aboriginal art. Several were encouraged to paint them because they were told they sell very well. Many young Aboriginals did not know much about their own creation stories, myths, legends and certainly iconographic symbols.
2. POLICY OF ENCOURAGEMENT IN PROMOTING NSW ABORIGINAL ART

While many reputable judges of various Aboriginal art competitions are aware of this appropriation of desert iconographies in considering awards recipients and participants to exhibitions, such as the NSW Parliament Indigenous Art Prize, there are no significant motivations for many emerging Aboriginal artists to use NSW and regional specific iconographies. Nor are there policies or programs to discourage the practice. A policy or program of positive encouragement to use NSW specific iconographies that will also address the appropriation of desert iconographies is necessary.

- Arts NSW, as the primary agency promoting Aboriginal art in the State, is the appropriate agency to make a policy statement along this line, perhaps in its Aboriginal Art Strategy.

3. PROGRAMS

- Funding sources such as Arts NSW, Australia Council for the Arts and Regional Art NSW make provisions in their funding guidelines to actively promote regional Aboriginal iconographies.
- Arts NSW and DAA consider adding an award category in the NSW Parliament Indigenous Art Prize that gives a prize to the “Most creative use of NSW Aboriginal iconography”.

- RANSW advocate to RADOs and with Arts NSW for its funded organisations to have written or documented Aboriginal art strategies that incorporate research on regional iconographies as major component in developing and promoting Aboriginal art in the regions. Only Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast have Indigenous Art Strategies.

Far West has already undertaken a research at the Powerhouse Museum that provided information on regional iconographies, from which it had conducted art workshop with young Aboriginal students in Brewarrina, Bourke, Walgett, etc. The use of regional iconography has been raised with artists and cultural workers in several RADOs - Central West, Orana and Eastern Riverina through this research. TAFE, artists and cultural workers in un-affiliated Griffith-Leeton and Illawarra-Shoalhaven recognize the importance of regional iconographies in developing Aboriginal art.

- Arts NSW, RANSW, and Museums and Galleries NSW lobby the Minister for the Arts to allocate funds for regional museums and galleries to acquire regional specific Aboriginal artifacts for their collection. This will make these artifacts accessible to Aboriginal artists for their inspiration or design.

4. **TAX**

- Art NSW investigate the taxation system to promote Aboriginal visual art through rebates or exemption for a limited period.

Arrangement could be made with the Taxation Office that the amount equivalent to the rebates or exemptions be used to fund NSW Aboriginal
visual sector for the period, particularly art hubs in remote and regional NSW, to supplement current funding allocations.
F. **Recommendations - Specifics**

1. **TAFE**

In areas where Aboriginal community or social services are absent or where the Aboriginal community is dysfunctional, TAFEs have become socialization venues. It is not uncommon to find mature aged people going through several certificates over many years. Enrolment for certificates is a requirement for accessing TAFE in many areas. Through TAFE many Aboriginal people managed to acquire skills, improved their education outcomes, and have moved on to university or full-time work, including improving art careers. Attendance at TAFE in the past several years however has declined that several campuses have only few Aboriginal students. In some of these campuses, courses (particularly arts) do not have Aboriginal students, such as Bega, Moruya, Dubbo, Tamworth and Wagga Wagga.

Despite several issues (refer to the succeeding sections) TAFE is still the most appropriate institution to provide a rounded training on the arts for those contemplating of becoming artists for young and older students. Their campuses have well-equipped arts facilities. Many accomplished Aboriginal artists have been recipients of the training provided by art courses delivered by TAFE, such as Garth Lena and Roy Kennedy - winners of the 2006 and 2009 NSW Parliament Indigenous Art Prize, respectively. While this report supports its role in providing basic education and training for Aboriginal people in the arts, there is a significant need to address the following issues
that have impacted on its ability to deliver, reflected in low Aboriginal participation and in few cases no Aboriginal participation, such as Dubbo and Cowra, and to a certain extent Bega, Moruya and Wagga Wagga.

**Racism:**

Complaints of racism against staff at two campuses (Lake Cargelligo at the time when they were serviced by Riverina TAFE and Moree) are a serious issue. It drives away not only Aboriginal students but also the community from TAFE, particularly from art courses. Both instances need to be investigated for appropriate responses. Complaint against a coordinator in another campus (Wilcannia) hinges on lack of trust of Aboriginal students, which needs to be addressed also.

- In the very short term, Arts NSW raise with TAFE authorities, and appropriate measures should be implemented to address it.

- A more strategic approach to prevent this problem could be addressed by cross-cultural training for those given the responsibility to teach and coordinate programs for Aboriginal students. This training could incorporate sessions on EEO, the NSW Ethnic Affairs Policy, and racial discrimination.

**Inflexibility:**

This is reflected in the strict application of the Resource Allocation Method (RAM) for determining support or withdrawal of support for certain courses, including art courses. Art classes for Aboriginal students in Lake Cargelligo and Wilcannia were victims of the rigid application of RAM. TAFE needs to formulate guidelines to enable TAFE coordinators to exercise some creativity in some areas where attendance is reasonably good but not high enough to meet 20:1 student-teacher ratio, like Albury-Wodonga.

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73 Lake Cargelligo is administered through Riverina TAFE while Broken Hill TAFE looks after the Wilcannia satellite campus.
Arts NSW and RANSW hold high level policy discussions with TAFE to give teachers and coordinators of arts courses, particularly in areas of high ATSI populations, some freedom to formulate creative approaches to address low attendance rates.

A general directive to all campuses should suffice to give teachers and coordinators some influence over course implementation, e.g. TAFE satellite campus in Wilcannia is doing it, Albury-Wodonga TAFE has significantly addressed teacher-student ratio.

Staff qualifications and behavior:

Several respondents in some campuses indicated that art teachers do not have the qualifications to teach or are not good teachers. This is one of the reasons that drove many artists and art organisations toward smaller community colleges and community mentors for their professional development. We suspect that lack of qualifications may not be the issue here but attitude, lack of understanding of Aboriginal culture, and lack of experience working with Aboriginal students. Few respondents raised the issue that in some cases TAFE had been too lenient – driven by economic motives – to giving away certificates to students. Certainly, this practice does disservice to the many that have learned from TAFE classes and TAFE that are doing well with their Aboriginal students, such as Wollongong.

The several cases where there is a positive relationship with Aboriginal students redound to two factors – TAFE has had a long positive history with the local Aboriginal community and having practicing artist as teachers/coordinators or Aboriginal coordinators. Dubbo TAFE lost Aboriginal students when the Aboriginal coordinator resigned in early 2009. Artist as teachers addresses numerous attitudinal and behavioural problems of students and teachers as art bridges many communication issues. This is most significant advantage of community mentoring.
The high turn-over rate of Aboriginal teachers and coordinators is brought about by several factors; one of which is the added responsibility of outreach work to ensure attendance. This additional function might be self-imposed but nevertheless responsible teachers and coordinators are necessary to ensure attendance. A shift in the thinking in community attitude and improvement in the economic condition of Aboriginal people will address this in the long-term. In the meantime, two possible short-term solutions could be adopted.

- TAFE could provide financial and other forms of support for art teachers and coordinators to undertake the extra responsibility of “outreach” work to ensure Aboriginal students attendance.

- Alternatively, TAFE could provide another position to undertake outreach work for art classes, including Aboriginal students. One TAFE campus allows students to work at home, with the proviso that a coordinator does home visits and checks on the quality of artwork regularly.

This works in areas where transport is a major problem, where family commitments and responsibilities prevent actual attendance in classes, and where social and community services are not available or accessible, such as child care.

Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast have been working with their local TAFE to address behavioural/attitudinal and content related issues. The former has been working with North Coast TAFE on a new course – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Design and Licensing Program, while the latter has undertaken cross-cultural training for staff of education providers.

2. RADO

Thirteen RADOs cover NSW. Only two regions – Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast have Indigenous Arts Development Officers (IADO) addressing primarily
Aboriginal needs. Northern Rivers is perhaps the most advanced in terms of providing professional development for their artists. In the past twelve months, there had been two major art exhibitions, several artist workshops, and other arts-related workshops. They have also participated in art fairs, regional and local markets for crafts and art. Northern Rivers has significantly raised the status of Aboriginal arts in the past several years because of these activities and with the employment of the IADO. This position will be valuable to sustain community-initiated arts activities that have developed in Wilcannia (West Darling) and the Lachlan Valley (Lake Cargelligo, Peak Hill and Murrin Bridge) in Central West.

- Arts NSW and RANSW advocate on behalf of these regions with DEEWR and DEWHA for grants for infrastructure and programs.

The types of infrastructure required have been identified in RANSW (2009) report Identification of Engagement Opportunities in the Indigenous Arts Industry in NSW. For example, infrastructure grants will provide Wilcannia with premises that can be used for workshops, studio, and gallery space. This building can also provide space for social activities, with the aim of encouraging the rest of the community to be more active in the cultural life of the town. West Darling, which is implementing a set of recommendations of the above report, is negotiating with the College of Fine Arts (CoFA) of UNSW for the latter to provide professional art advisers. Lease of printing press has been discussed in the preliminary meeting with the Dean of CoFA.

- Art NSW, RANSW, and West Darling to lobby for resources to acquire premises in Wilcannia for an art centre. This lobbying includes advocating with DEEWR and DEWHA for the several positions for three years initially.
Positions identified in the above-mentioned recommendation could serve as a template for training up Aboriginal people in both the primary art sector and the secondary sector, as project officers in art projects, clerical/administrative workers in an art organisation, and gallery assistants.

- Art NSW to address in the long-term the gap in services provided by RADOs in areas without IADOs and investigate funding three regional coordinator positions for the following regions – North West, Far West, Central West, Orana, Upper Hunter, Eastern Riverina, Albury-Wodonga, Southern Tablelands, and Griffith-Leeton.

- Art NSW with RANSW to consult with the local Aboriginal community to identify resources required to help Lake Cargelligo become a thriving, sustainable and viable regional art hub in remote NSW. Arts NSW allocate funds for this purpose.

- RANSW in its grants program consider a focused or targeted approach to support the organic development of Aboriginal regional art hubs. This approach should be informed by empirical research.

3. MENTORS

Mentors have always existed in Aboriginal communities. Elders usually perform these roles. They pass on to younger members of the communities, creation stories, myths, laws and traditions, history, including survival skills, which are the foundation of Aboriginal art. Artist-mentors or artist-elders undertake the added function of transferring or mentoring younger Aboriginals artistic skills. Arts NSW provide some resources for these mentors to continue teaching young artists. These senior artists are valuable for imparting technical skills as well as teaching the cultural foundation of regional Aboriginal art to younger artists.
through the use of regional specific iconographies, creation stories, and traditions. This foundation defines NSW Aboriginal art and is just as important as the central Australian or desert cultural traditions.

- Art NSW set up a grants program that provides small amounts to support these mentors.

- Art NSW set up an award for recognition of the contribution of Aboriginal senior artist-mentor in the promotion of NSW Aboriginal art and the development of NSW Aboriginal artists.

4. TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

This report identifies fourteen tertiary institution campuses in regional NSW – College of Fine Arts UNSW, Charles Sturt University, University of Wollongong and South Cross University. These universities offer arts degree courses at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. The UNSW College of Fine Arts already has a very significant exposure to Aboriginal art in the Central Australia and a significant contributor to the NSW Parliament Aboriginal Art Prize.

- Art NSW and Regional Arts NSW establish partnerships with these tertiary institutions and provide funding support in developing programs or providing access to their arts programs as resource on professional development for Aboriginal artists.

- Art NSW and Regional Arts NSW pilot these partnerships in the following regions/areas: West Darling (Wilcannia), and Central West (Lake Cargelligo).
Wilcannia and Lake Cargelligo are two of the most disadvantaged areas in regional NSW, where resources are scarce, but have the critical number of talented artists to develop as art hubs. Artists represent a wide variety of art forms - painting, wood burning, weaving, emu egg carving, pottery-making. The latter art form will take advantage of locally available white clay. They are at the extreme level of need for professional development and other forms of support. Immediate returns to investments in these areas will be in the improvement in the quality of art work, motivation level of artists, education-related outcomes from art courses (numeracy and literacy), and mental-health of the community.

5. REGIONAL ART GALLERIES

Professional development offered by regional art galleries addresses the third step in the creation chain – promotion of Aboriginal art. More importantly, training with these institutions could provide access to long-term employment of Aboriginal people in the primary art creation sector, as well as the secondary sector, e.g. education, retail, entertainment, museum, sports and recreation. Regional art galleries could provide training, apprenticeship and mentorship in curatorial work, gallery operation, retail and sales, and education.

- Arts NSW and RANSW work in partnership with Museum and Galleries NSW (MGNSW) to develop and strategic plan to mentorship, apprenticeship and training for Aboriginal people in various aspects of gallery and museum work.

- Arts NSW, RANSW and MGNSW make representations with DEEWR and DEWHA for funding to developing this plan, and the necessary funding for several positions, which will be identified through research.
These types of professional development will address the need of Aboriginal people working in the arts and cultural sector that support the creative process.

6. **STATISTICS**

Industry statistics provides the core of any empirically-based policy making. It is useful in determining funds allocation, evaluating impact or effectiveness of programs and policies and the degree to which they address certain critical needs. The objective use of statistics imparts some scientific basis for the equitable distribution of and hence accountability for the use of public funds.

- Arts NSW investigate the establishment of a central repository of quantitative data and information on Aboriginal visual arts, e.g. funding allocation, funded programs effectiveness, geographic distribution of programs, artist/art organisations database, art sales.

- Arts NSW to negotiate with Australia Council for the Arts for sharing information on Council funded programs in NSW for the purposes of the preceding recommendation.

- Arts NSW investigate the Canadian Arts Data, a common financial and statistical database managed by the Canada Council for the Arts for arts organisations which receive funding from all sources, that provides essential information on the financial and statistical situation of arts organisations that is reliable and consistent across jurisdictions for the purposes of the above two recommendations.

- Arts NSW investigate the use of the taxation system to collect economic data on Aboriginal arts through a rebate system, where the sale of art entitles the buyer rebate. A rate equivalent to the GST is a good starting base. Rebate is applied for either after sales or at the end of the year. Through this rebate the taxation office could discriminate Aboriginal art
sales from other art sales, which can be collected and analyse periodically. Regional distribution of data would then be possible.
Summary and conclusion

While there is movement away from TAFE in some regions, it is still the main provider of basic art training for many Aboriginal students. To continue providing this valuable role, TAFE must address criticisms against it, such as racism, quality of courses, staff behavior, and inflexibility. It must also change its perception of art courses. It must acknowledge that in many instances where it is offered to Aboriginal students, it is more comprehensive. It incorporates literacy and numeracy and art is a medium through which they are taught technical skills.

The development of the Aboriginal visual arts sectors require more advanced training and professional development programs beyond what TAFE currently offers. Regional Community Colleges are playing a part. Also, there are not-for-profit organisations that provide art courses attached to social and community welfare programs. The thirteen Regional Arts Development Officers also perform a role, which involves primarily facilitating or brokering artists’ access to professional development programs and through research on Aboriginal culture.

The most significant providers are tertiary institutions and community mentors. Their potential to contribute in the development and vitality of Aboriginal visual arts sector is immense. Tertiary institutions are filling in some gaps through more innovative, new technology-based, advanced art courses in multi-media, film-making, print-making, animation, etc. that cater even to post-graduate levels. While community mentors/artist elders are also providing advanced technical skills to artists, they are...
significantly valuable in the cultural aspect of Aboriginal arts as in most cases because they are the custodians of Aboriginal culture – a role embedded in Aboriginal society.

While some funding capital is required in several regions, many of whom have never received financial support for art programs changes, the recommendations detailed in preceding sections require essentially reworking, streamlining and shifting of already available resources to areas that critically require them. Wilcannia, Lachlan Valley and much of the Far West are areas disadvantaged by distance to resources and funding. College of Fine Art (UNSW) and the School of Performing and Visual Arts (Charles Sturt University) are willing partners to the professional development of Aboriginal artists. Working out arrangements with these institutions do not require intensive capital funding but generous investment of time and energy by the significant stakeholders, e.g. Aboriginal art organisations, artists, art advisory boards, advocacy bodies.

There are also some practical measures that can be done now. These measures involve capital funding to take advantage of the momentum created by the community arts sector in the Central West and the West Darling regions. There is a need for a regional coordinator for these regions, including Central West, South West and Griffith-Leeton. In Central West, Lake Cargelligo needs pottery making tools.
AN ARTS-LEAD ECONOMIC RECOVERY FOR ABORIGINAL REGIONAL NSW
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS IN THE ABORIGINAL VISUAL ARTS SECTOR

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