

FACT SHEET: Engaging with Aboriginal artists and communities

Overview

When working with the Aboriginal community on a project, it is important to understand the sensitivities of cultural material, heritage and practices, and acknowledge the rights of Aboriginal people under the [United Nations](#).

Before recording or documenting any works please ensure that you obtain appropriate permissions with prior informed consent.

Ensure that any collaboration agreement is made clear to everyone working on the project.

It is your responsibility to ensure cultural protocol is endorsed, and Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property is protected. We recommend contacting [Arts Law Centre of Australia](#) for advice, if applicable.

CONSULTATION: including Aboriginal voices in your project

When working or engaging with Aboriginal community as part of your project, it is important to be open and honest about your project considerations, impacts and opportunities.

Consider planning an engagement strategy that includes community consultation with local Aboriginal artists and organisations in the community.

We recommend the following:

- watch the Australian Film Television Radio School (AFTRS) consultation protocol short video [here](#).
- contact your [NSW Aboriginal Land Council](#) to share your project idea and schedule a time to meet and discuss ways of working together.
- contact [Local Government NSW](#) to find out if your Council has an Aboriginal Community Development Officer, who may be able to assist you with contacting Aboriginal Elders and Aboriginal organisations in your community.
- if your project is being delivered in regional NSW, you may wish to contact the [Regional Arts Network](#) to speak with the local Aboriginal Arts Officer.
- as part of your engagement strategy, you may wish to consider holding a community night to allow Aboriginal communities to provide input and have their say on your proposed project.
- if you have already engaged with an Aboriginal community and gained verbal permission from the Elders/cultural bearers, as the cultural experts in sharing their stories, ask the participants to sign a consent form and give them a copy for their records.

COLLABORATION: investing in Aboriginal artists and communities

Investing in employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in the arts and culture sector should be a priority when developing your project. It may be relevant to factor the following items into your project budget:

- industry standard artists fees for artists and creative personnel (see How to Make an Application Guide)
- consultation fees for Aboriginal Elders and local community members for their valued time and cultural knowledge
- [NSW Aboriginal Land Council](#) fees for Welcome to Country/Acknowledgement of Country.

COMMUNITY LEGACY: consider the Aboriginal community beyond the scope of your project

It is important to acknowledge and pay respect to the Aboriginal Elders of the community, and to listen, observe and learn their cultural ways.

Keep building and maintaining your relationship with the community after the project is complete to ensure a meaningful recognition of what is achieved and foster the potential of working together in the future.

Consider holding a workshop or debrief with the Aboriginal community at the completion of your project to gain their feedback and say thank you. You may wish to plan a community gathering, such as a morning tea or BBQ for the Aboriginal community or Elders who advised or collaborated on your project.

OTHER RESOURCES:

[Create NSW Cultural Protocol](#)

Indigenous Copyright, Copyright Agency Limited

<https://www.copyright.com.au/about-copyright/indigenous-copyright/>

Protocols for Working with Indigenous Artists, Australia Council for the Arts

<https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/about/protocols-for-working-with-indigenous-artists/>

NSW-based Aboriginal arts organisations

Organisation Name	Website	Artform/type
Bangarra Dance Theatre Australia	https://www.bangarra.com.au/	Dance/Theatre
Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative	https://www.boomalli.com.au/	Visual Arts
Brewarrina Aboriginal Cultural Museum Aboriginal Corporation	http://www.brewarrina.nsw.gov.au/tourism-101525/attractions-activities/aboriginal-cultural-museum.aspx	Museums and Galleries
Gadigal Information Service Aboriginal Corporation	http://www.kooriradio.com/history.html	Digital media Music/Multi-arts
Moogahlin Performing Arts Inc	https://www.moogahlin.org/	Theatre/Performing Arts
Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance	http://www.saltwaterfreshwater.com.au/	Festivals