

Third edition

Manage an art centre
in Central Australia.
It'll change your life!

THE DESART ART CENTRE GUIDEBOOK



Culture First.
Supporting Aboriginal Art Centres
of Central Australia

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WELCOME

Werte! Welcome to your new job in an Aboriginal art centre.

This book has been made to help you in your new job. There are stories about how to do your job, where to go for help, and problems new workers in art centres have and how to solve them. It also includes important information about working the right way with us on our country, staying happy and healthy, and keeping safe.

Kele.

ABOUT THIS GUIDEBOOK

Desart has a million stories to share from our 25+ year history! This guidebook has been collated from the Desart archives and the expertise of Desart and member art centre staff and artists, past and present. We talked with Desart directors and staff, art centre directors and staff, industry peers and colleagues, friends and supporters about what to include: the key message is that **you are not alone**. You have resources and people at your disposal.

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Culture First.

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of Central Australia

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Narelle Holland, Emma Sanderson and Pamela Hogan
(Papulankutja Artists) at the Desert Mob MarketPlace 2017.
Image: James Henry, Desert.

ART CENTRE TEAM

Art centre managers

In the early days of the Aboriginal art and craft movement – the 1970s and 1980s – there were barely a dozen art centres in the remote outposts of Central Australia, doing business by fax machines, radio headsets and carbon copy receipt books. Staff from outside these places were employed to work with artists as *art advisors*.

Over time, with increasing arts administration, shifts in government policy, a growing arts and tourism industry and the incursion of commercial compliance, these positions became equal parts business management, arts advisory and market mediation: *art centre managers*. It is a pivotal role that has an enormous impact on an art centre's success or failure. It involves organising, planning, motivating, mentoring, innovating and leading – under instructions and delegation from the art centre's directors or governing body.

Most art centre manager positions are currently funded through Commonwealth Government programs.

Art workers

Art workers are Aboriginal people employed by the art centre. They assist with the day-to-day running of the art centre. Art workers are generally from within the community and have often worked for many years at the art centre, and have 'shown the ropes' to several art centre managers.

Today around 100 Aboriginal art workers are employed in art centres in the Desert membership. These positions are usually funded by the Ministry for the Arts – a result of industry advocacy and the 2007 Senate Inquiry into Australia's Indigenous visual arts and craft sector that recommended the Commonwealth convert welfare-funded positions in art centres into properly funded jobs.

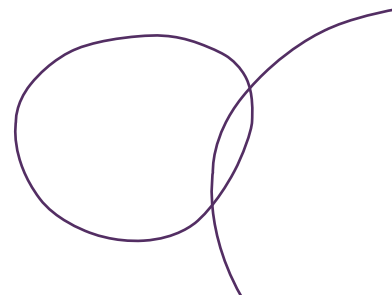
Directors

The majority of art centres in the Desert membership are corporations registered with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC). They have a rule book that sets out the purpose of the corporation, what it is able to do and how it must be managed.

The governing body of most art centres is a board of directors, appointed by members. Art centre directors are active strategic leaders and decision-makers with an important job: they are the stewards of the art centre. The art centre manager reports directly to the directors about art centre business.

Artists

Aboriginal artists are why the art centre – and your job – exists. Many art workers and directors are also artists.



ART CENTRES

JANE YOUNG, DESART CHAIRPERSON

When I was small, I travelled all around with my mother and father to Granite Downs Station, Alice Springs, Todd River Station and Oodnadatta. When the Little Flower mission moved from Arltunga to Santa Teresa, my mum put me in the dormitory with the older girls there and that is where I grew up in the 1950s. My mum, Agnes Abbott, is from Santa Teresa, and my father is a Western Arrarnta man from Hermannsburg. I have lived all over Central Australia and now I live at Hidden Valley in Alice Springs with Agnes and our family.

I have travelled around and visited a lot of art centres, even on Thursday Island. I have seen Aboriginal people working in a lot of art centres, working together with whitefellas and artists. Before, there were no art centres; then, in 1949, only Ernabella Arts. Now new art centres are coming up everywhere. Whether Aboriginal people have an art centre or not, they still have their culture.

Aboriginal people feel strong with culture.

Before white people came to Australia, Aboriginal people painted on the ground and in the caves. Aboriginal people used to tell stories on the ground too. That's how they kept their culture strong. The art today is strong from that. Our stories are told to the outside world, who don't know about Aboriginal culture.

When I was little my aunty and my mum's grandfather told us bedtime stories. We used to just sit around and listen, my grandfather would sing



Jane Young, artist with Tangentyere Artists and Desart Chairperson. Image: Alex Craig, Tangentyere Artists.

the story, tell us the stories about everything. I remember all the stories the old people told us. Now we have got the new generation. They tell stories differently.

Some people say that art centres were set up by white people and are for white people. To me that's not true. Some people don't know the difference between an art gallery and an Aboriginal art centre. Number one – Aboriginal art centres belong to us, to Aboriginal people. Art centres are places where you can paint, people come and talk story, a lot of people come together. It's a happy place for everyone. We don't have violence in our art centres. You can feel comfortable to sit down and talk about art and culture or if you have a problem. The art centre is for the community, not for private people. Art centres do all kinds of work and programs to support families and culture.

A day in the life of an art centre ...

In a remote Aboriginal community on any given day, an art centre manager heads out of their front gate armed with a long list of things to do. A manager's best-laid plans often go awry. A desert chill of -3° keeps everyone in the community snugly submerged under towers of blankets piled ten-high.

I arrive at the art centre ...

A note from the community's office is taped to the door: *Mail plane arriving at 9 am today.* It's 8 am.

Tearing the note away from the door – half the new paint job comes with it – I enter the art centre and look to the pile of canvases on the studio floor where I had been sitting with our art worker Janice the night before, until it got too cold and the three bars on the radiator heater were a useless glow. We got the photography and cataloguing done, but I hadn't entered the consignment note into the SAM (Stories Art Money) database or completed the exhibition contract.

Probably a couple of hours work and always easier with a second person to double-check and read out catalogue numbers.

Janice would soon be on her way to Alice Springs as a medical escort for her cousin and I didn't want to humbug her – we worked until 7 pm last night. Alice Springs is a ten-hour drive if you go flat-out, but there are always places to stop along the way; a quick stop at the roadhouse could take an hour when friends and family are there. The other

art workers will be getting their kids ready for school.

So, I have an hour to pull it all together: roll all the canvases in bubble wrap, slide them into their cylinders and get them to the plane. No point in stressing. Just do it.

The mail plane departs overhead with our precious cargo en route more than 15 000 km to New York City. It is just after 9 am. I gaze towards the expansive blue sky: red dust billows and throws small stones about, one catching me on the cheek bone. I drive back to the art centre, picking up some artists on the way. An arts journalist from a major national newspaper arrives at the art centre. I calmly support directors, artists and interpreters through the interview and photo shoot, trying to keep out of the way of the journalist and the story.

The journalist departs. Static and feedback echoes out from a loudspeaker: a community consultation on a new government policy is about to begin, followed by a BBQ.

Several hours and sausages later, artists and art centre workers are exhausted by the consultation and retire home to decipher the body language and demeanor of the government visitors. I make myself known to the 'govie' mob and offer a tour of the art centre. One of the art centre directors joins the group. They have been up all night with a community conflict and a chest infection, sat patiently through the consultation and now they are graciously answering questions: 'So how many artists work here?' 'How long does it take to do a painting?'

'Do you have any exhibitions?'

The director answers with a proud and playful smile, 'Uwa, one's opening up in New York next month.'

He patiently explains the importance of the Tjukurrpa (law) after which the art centre is named.

Meanwhile the art workers select paintings and we work together to secure sales. They issue receipts, certificates of authenticity and artists' biographies, and wrap the paintings up. The government mob are as impressed as we are that our internet is working well enough to be able to use the EFTPOS and SAM, and we throw in a few colour catalogues from our last show at Raft Artspace for good measure. The director and I stand together on the verandah as the government mob go the way of the journalist, fishtailing up the track to their next consultation. Some days the traffic in and out of the community is never-ending.

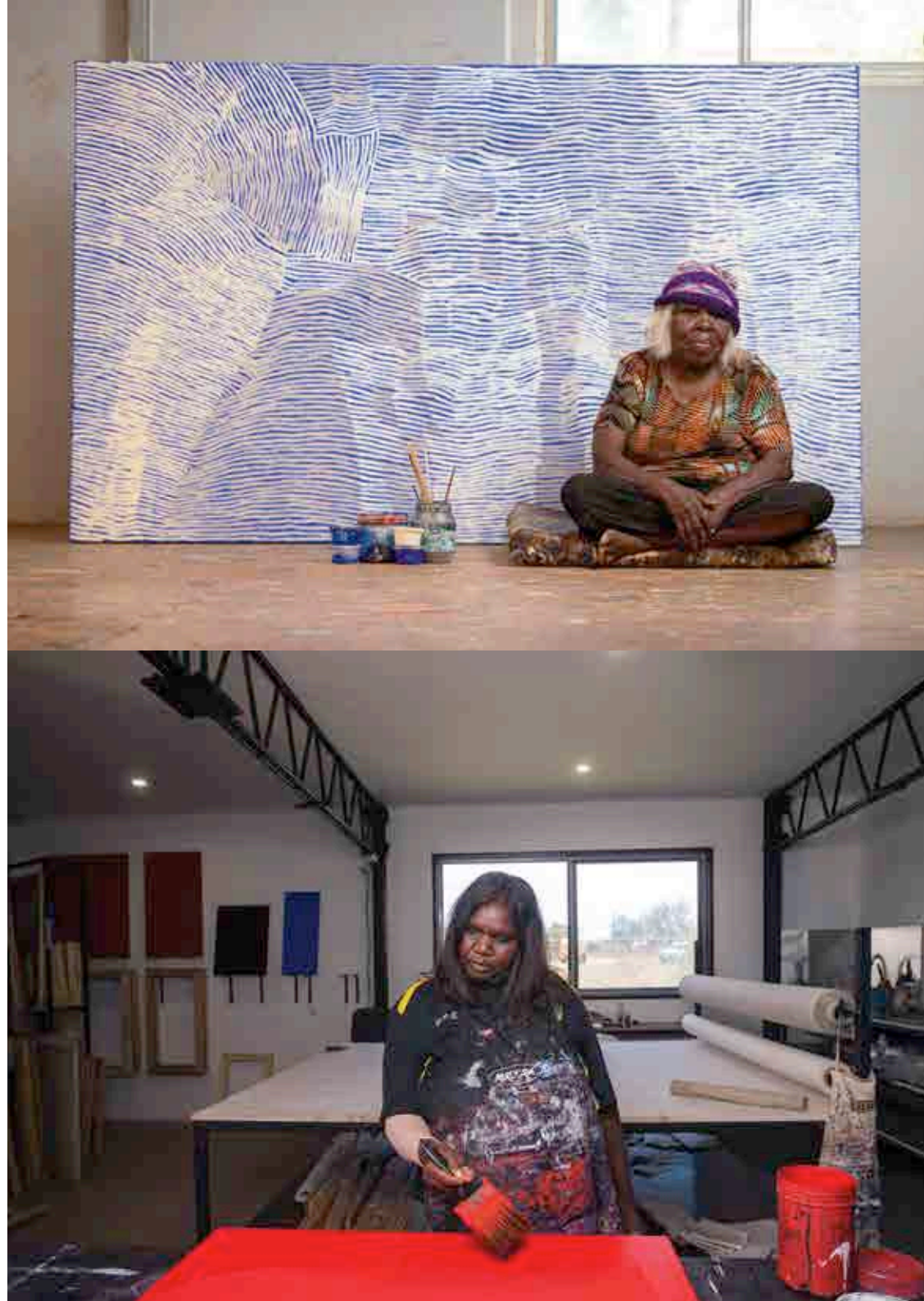
There isn't even a moment to head back inside. A clapped-out 2WD car, every wheel rotating at a different angle and momentum, no windscreens, and a Hawthorn emblem painted on the bonnet, shudders and shakes to a stop. It's the art centre matriarch arriving from her homeland nearby. Adults and kids tumble out. A young girl carefully carries a canvas. The old woman has a glint in her eye – it's something special. The canvas is unravelled across the floor with a flourish, an astonishing collaborative artwork. Everyone sits around and admires the work, soaking it up. The old lady pokes me in the ribs and everybody laughs: it's a great work.

I'm glad my phone is charged up, and we activate the recording function to take down the story and document the work. Older artists talk in language and the younger girl, who carried the canvas, interprets. Everyone agrees that this work will be the centrepiece for a group exhibition. The wonky car crawls back down the road. The canvas is catalogued and tagged, rolled up around a cardboard tube and placed on the exhibition shelf with a new label, beginning the curation of a new exhibition – a good job for Janice when she comes back from Alice Springs.

By now it's 4 pm – lucky there was a BBQ at the community meeting. Time to check the emails that usually tumble down the screen: 20, 30, 40 competing priorities. Not today – there's now a glitch with the internet connection. It will have to wait until tomorrow. Now, back to that list of things to do ...

TOP Eunice Napanangka Jack from Ikuntji Artists.
Image: Rhett Hammerton, Desart

BOTTOM Isobel Major, Art Worker at Papunya Tjupi.
Image: Rhett Hammerton, Desart.



The art centre's role in community

Art centres are dynamic places of cultural expression, empowerment, non-welfare based income, local leadership, choice, safety, health and wellbeing. Art centres uphold artists' rights and work closely with Arts Law – Artists in the Black, Copyright Agency Ltd and the Indigenous Art Code.

Some art centres return more than \$1 million per year to the community through art sales, licensing and product sales. Other art centres are groups returning small amounts of profit, enough to support local cultural events. Some art centres show their work at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, or under the lights and shine of galleries

in London and Paris. Other art centres exhibit under the flickering fluoro tube and hip-hop soundtrack of the local community hall. Art centres are a positive part of Aboriginal communities that the general public rarely sees.

Art centres are community-oriented places that offer artists and art workers training, curatorial jobs, language projects, trips to country, professional development, access to new technologies and travel across Australia and the world to exhibitions and art fairs.

Art centres are often the central point in a community for employment and for experimentation and creation – not only in art-making, but in Aboriginal business management, leadership, cross-cultural engagement, agency and expression.

Coming home from a bush trip, Yuendumu.
Image: Desart.



WELCOME

'Art centres are important community places. They are innovative and vibrant creative spaces where culture is kept strong, passed on between old and young, and places where Aboriginal people can share our arts and culture with the world.'

You have joined the Desart family! Here are some welcome messages and tips from art centre directors and staff across our membership.

– Philip Watkins, Desart CEO

'Be happy, safe, feel welcome in your new job and always show respect for Aboriginal law, culture and country in communities.'

'It's important for art centres to keep running for our artists and to make it a safe and trusting environment – to look after our artists, as well as our art, the way they deserve to be looked after.'

'Aboriginal people have a different way of life to people in the city. This is sometimes hard for new people to understand. It's important to respect our different way of life and accept things the way they are. You might need to "manage" in a way that is different to what you are used to, in order to be a good manager out here.'

'Be open to learning: use your one mouth/two ears in proportion! Take time to listen, there is much to learn and new concepts to embrace.'



Tuppy Ngintja Goodwin and Philip Watkins at Desart Mob Marketplace 2017.
Image: James Henry, Desart.

'Have a meeting with staff first thing so everyone can introduce themselves together and let you know about the community. Let them know about yourself, too.'

'Listen to directors, artists and art workers.'

'We will want to make arrangements with everyone to introduce you and show you our country and to tell you the stories for it. We will teach you where you can and can't go, and we will teach you about bush tucker and bush medicine.'

'When you're doing your job good way, everybody's happy. You will know.'



Ilawanti Ken of Tjanpi Desert Weavers giving an artists' talk at Desert Mob 2017. Image: James Henry, Desart.

Desart

Desart is the peak industry body that provides support services to Aboriginal art centres in Central Australia. Incorporated in 1993 to advocate for the independence of remote art centres in the region, we are a united voice for our members, advocating for better operational environments, and supporting artists to exercise their artistic, cultural, social and economic rights. We offer our members unique opportunities to market their art and grow and diversify their audiences, and we deliver substantial programs that encourage culturally safe art centres with good governance and ethical business practices, and exciting careers for artists, art workers and art centre managers.

More than 40 art centres across the Northern Territory, Western Australia

and South Australia are members of Desart. Collectively, the membership represents over 8000 artists from 16 distinct language groups, and employs more than 100 Aboriginal art workers.

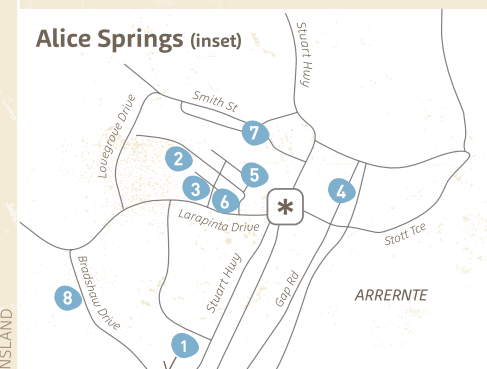
Desart is directed by an Aboriginal board of ten directors elected from the art centre membership. Two members represent each of the desert regions: Central Desert, Barkly, North West, APY Lands, Ngaanyatjarra West.

The Desart office is located on Arrernte country, in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), and Desart directors and staff, and artists, arts business specialists and project workers travel about 200 000 km a year on dusty, corrugated, red-dirt roads and sometimes in tiny planes to support and work for our remote member art centres.

This map illustrates the distribution of art centres across Central Australia, categorized by region: BARKLY (orange), APY SOUTH (yellow), and CENTRAL (blue). The map includes major roads like the Barkly Highway, Stuart Hwy, and Plenty Highway, as well as geographical features like Kings Canyon and Lake Eyre. A legend at the bottom left indicates that the map is not to scale and includes a north arrow. A legend at the bottom right identifies the regions by color: BARKLY (orange), APY SOUTH (yellow), and CENTRAL (blue). The map also shows the borders of Western Australia, Northern Territory, and South Australia.

Regions: BARKLY APY SOUTH CENTRAL

- Alice Springs** (inset)



* Alice Springs *see inset* →

SEALED ROADS



BUSH ROADS



Regions: BARKLY APY SOUTH CENTRAL DESERT NORTH WEST NGAANYATJARRA WEST

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Aboriginal people have always traded art and objects – pearl shells from the Dampier Peninsula were traded all the way into the desert. Aboriginal people traded with people in and from Asia hundreds of years before whitefellas came to Australia. Even convicts and Aboriginal people in Sydney traded with each other after the invasion of the continent.

It is very important for new art centre staff to learn and understand the impact and legacies of the history of where they are working. Make it your business to find this out and to reflect on your place in this context. Here, because of limited space, we offer an overview of the emergence of the Indigenous art industry in Australia and what led to Desart's inception.

The Aboriginal arts industry in Central Australia has an epic and tragic history: station life and the pastoral industry, the location of one of the biggest tourist attractions and cultural icons in the world, the impact of the missions, the fame of Albert Namatjira, the violence of the frontier, atomic bomb and weapons testing, the pain and loss of the stolen generations, the birth of the Aboriginal art movement, the self-determination policy, and the site of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (the 'Intervention') into Aboriginal communities.

The first Aboriginal art made for museums and the general market was collected by anthropologists and taken away to be studied. Many trading posts

and missions that were set up in remote Australia bought and sold Aboriginal art and craft. Some missions exported art to their stores in Melbourne and Sydney, to generate income for their activities.

The first community art centre in Australia was established at Ernabella in the late 1940s by the Methodist mission, although the term 'art centre' was not used at that time.

In 1949, *Arnhem Land art*, the first exhibition to attribute individual people by name to artworks – not simply as 'Aboriginal' or by 'tribe' – opened at Australia's first commercial gallery, the David Jones Art Gallery in Sydney. It was curated by famous anthropologists the Berndts. The time and place of this step forward is critical: the veil of the 'outback' was being lifted to tourism, the pastoral industry was opening up to transportation, the first commercial galleries were emerging and Aboriginal art began to be attributed to individual 'artists'.

In 1951 Czech surrealist artist Karel Kupka made his first visit to Australia. Perhaps he saw Aboriginal shields and artefacts for the first time in the home of photographer Axel Poignant. Kupka returned in 1956 to Milngimbi, Arnhem Land, and three more times to Milngimbi until 1973: collecting, documenting and culturally appropriating Aboriginal art and artefacts. He put together an exhibition that he named *Dawn of Art*, and toured it throughout Europe, together with



Tjunkaya Tapaya weaving in the Ernabella craft room, c.1964.
Image: Bill Edwards; Bill Edwards Collection, A0180251, Ara Irititja.

a text including an introduction by surrealist Andre Breton.¹

In 1965, Australia's first national tourism report recommended the establishment of an Aboriginal arts industry. Six years later, the federal government sponsored the establishment of a retail/wholesale marketing company, Aboriginal Arts & Craft Pty Ltd (which traded for some 20 years). This was the genesis of the art centre model – a government-funded 'art advisor' pricing, buying, transporting and marketing art in remote communities.

Meanwhile, in 1968, public servant Dr H.C. Nugget Coombs lobbied for and established the Australian Council for the Arts. Shortly afterwards and

thousands of kilometres away in Papunya, the Western Desert art movement began to emerge and, in 1972, Australia's first artists' cooperative opened: Papunya Tula Artists.

In 1973, in the early years of the era of self-determination, the Aboriginal Arts Board (AAB) was formed, chaired by Yirrkala's Wandjuk Marika. The AAB coordinated exhibitions and market opportunities for art centres, both domestically and abroad, and oversaw funding for professional development for Indigenous artists.

In 1987, the Association of Northern and Central Australian Aboriginal Artists (ANCAAA), a lobby group of sixteen art centres, fought to maintain their

¹ See 'The Collector: Karel Kupka in north Australia' by Nicholas Rothwell, *The Monthly*, October 2007 <https://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2007/october/1281338813/nicholas-rothwell/collector>; *Dawn of Art: painting and sculpture of Australian Aborigines*, Karel Kupka, Angus & Robertson c1965; 'Some People are Stories' by Djon Mundine in *No Ordinary Place: The Art of David Malangi* (ed. Jenkins), NGA 2004, 28–42.

independence from government control. The result was a major review of the industry through the Commonwealth Government: 'The Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Industry', 1989 (often referred to as the 'Altman Report').

Central Australian art centres separated from ANCAAA to form Desart and to lobby and advocate their importance, independence and significance to Australia's identity. Top End artists formed the Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (ANKAAA – now ANKA) based in Darwin. Other entities sprang up, supporting regional and remote Indigenous artists elsewhere in Australia.

Desart has consistently advocated for public policies, budgets, legislation and educational campaigns to better protect and support an ethical Aboriginal arts industry. Escalating unethical business practices in the 2000s – including 'carpet-baggers' in Central Australia – coincided with a global art market high, and prompted the National

Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) to lead development of a code of conduct for the industry. This evolved into the Indigenous Art Code. Associated advocacy (including by Desart) resulted in a parliamentary inquiry into the sector in 2007. We continue to push for better growth opportunities for the sector.

So, the Aboriginal art centre movement has its origins in the same set of politics and struggles as Aboriginal land rights and self-determination. Today, cultural authority, agency, authenticity and ethical practices, and maximum return to the artist are core foundations and priorities of art centres and Desart. Art centres are important cultural enterprises, providing culturally appropriate avenues for people to earn a living. Desart continues to ensure that the cultural authority of Aboriginal artists in Central Australia is respected and the significant place of their art (and the structures that facilitate it) are widely understood, supported and celebrated.

DESART ADVOCACY

Desart takes its remit of speaking with a united voice on behalf of its members very seriously. We aim to change minds and influence people to achieve better opportunities for Aboriginal artists, targeting existing and proposed legislation, and policies and programs of governments. We work with our art centre members and other Aboriginal peak bodies and organisations to address industry-wide and cross-sector issues, and we support rigorous ethical

research that commits to community benefits alongside potential for broader evidence-based industry gains.

Highlights of Desart's advocacy work include:

- Fake Art Harms Culture Campaign (Indigenous Art Code)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Economies research project
- government support and funding that better addresses the sector's needs



On the Fake Art Harms Culture campaign trail, L to R: artists Eunice Porter, Nerida Giles and Martha Ward, and Warakurna Artists' Manager Jane Menzies. Image: Indigenous Art Code.

- improved protection for Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property
- career opportunities for Aboriginal artists and art workers.

We seek input from our art centre members on important industry issues, ensuring that our responses to issues reflect the voices and priorities of their artists. For example, the development of our submission to the 2017 House of Representatives inquiry into the growing presence of inauthentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait 'style' art and craft was informed by feedback and comments from a membership survey specifically on this issue.

We serve on industry boards and advisory committees (e.g. the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair and TARNANTHI festival), and we introduce our members to ethical marketing opportunities.

We initiate and participate in activities to market Aboriginal art, educate and diversify the audience for it, and promote the local and global benefits of art centres, often working with industry and government partners. We produce the annual Desert Mob Symposium and Desart Photography Prize, and organise commemorative exhibitions and special events such as the Lingiari Art Award. We work to open up the international realm, too.

SERVICES FOR ART CENTRE MEMBERS

The principle of 'culture first' is fundamental to Desart's work, championing the futures of Aboriginal art centres as envisaged by their artists. This includes embedding ethical and culturally secure practices and processes across the industry, promoting local solutions to local problems, and attracting diverse and better investment in artists and their art centres. Desart works to enhance career pathways for artists, art workers and art centre managers.

Aboriginal-governed and owned art centres in Central Australia pay a small annual fee for full membership to access Desart's suite of services and opportunities, including the Strong Business and Art Worker programs. Alongside this, we manage SAM (Stories Art Money), an online artwork management system that Desart developed for art centres. SAM is used by most art centres within Desart's membership, as well as many art centres elsewhere in the country.

Our team designs and prioritises Desart's annual programs to anticipate and meet the needs of our members. We source input face-to-face and via surveys and call-outs. We also draw on our collective industry expertise and extensive national and international professional networks to identify and deliver relevant new opportunities, and find better ways to do things. If ever there's something more or better you think we could be doing for artists and their art centres, please tell us.

Desart offers its full member art centres:

- HR support to recruit, orient and retain art centre managers, employ and support Aboriginal art workers, and build a culturally secure, happy and legally compliant workplace.
- free professional development programs and support for art centre managers and directors
- support and free accredited and non-accredited training for Aboriginal art workers
- access to IT technical support
- funding and fundraising information
- access to a register of experienced independent interim art centre managers, business specialists, bookkeepers, artists and trainers
- access to independent legal advice
- audits of infrastructure needs
- invitations to the annual Desart Art Centre Conference
- eligibility to participate in the annual Desert Mob Exhibition, Symposium and MarketPlace
- photography workshops and invitations to enter the Desart Photography Prize
- equitable travel subsidies to Desart's major events and training opportunities
- regular member communications, including a quarterly newsletter and monthly e-blasts
- a free, confidential counselling and coaching service 24/7 for all art centre staff.

Associate members can access all of these services (some may incur a fee), with the exception of Desert Mob.

STRONG BUSINESS PROGRAM

As its name implies, the Strong Business Program supports art centres to run strong, healthy businesses. We work closely with art centre managers, coordinators, and directors to help them do their jobs well so that artists can get on with creating art of the highest quality.

We encourage you not to neglect anyone's professional development, including your own, and to jump on-board for the opportunities that we co-design and flexibly deliver. This might be one-on-one coaching, upskilling in financial planning etc.

We have lots of information and experience on hand and we manage membership benefits, including IT technical support. We're also the go-to team for Desart's annual major events: the Desart Art Centre Conference, and Desert Mob (in partnership with Araluen Arts Centre). These significant opportunities are explained in the Major Desert Events section that begins on p. 20.

ART WORKER PROGRAM

This stream of Desart's service supports Aboriginal art workers within Desart's membership.

Art workers bring to their art centre expert knowledge of their community, and how things are done culturally. Some also bring local language skills. These things assist them in their work with artists, elders and managers. Award-winning artist Robert Fielding began his art career as an art worker with Mimili Maku, and he says, 'We

Desart's Strong Business Program is divided into seven support streams.

1. Human Resource support
2. Resources developed specifically for art centres in Central Australia
3. Individual manager coaching sessions
4. On-site board governance support programs
5. Legal support for art centres in partnership with Arts Law
6. IT services and technical support
7. Employee Assistance Program (EAP) confidential counselling and support.

Our remit encompasses all these things and more, so if you need help with anything that's not directly related to art workers or SAM, ask us. (You can, of course, talk to us about those things, too.)

are the people who make art centres breathe life. We are the ones who hold stories, song, dance and culture. We work for our people.'

In order for more local Aboriginal people to be actively involved in all facets of their art centres, we need to get things right for art workers now, so we can show young people their career and training pathway alongside strong community role models. Aboriginal art workers and their families are

likely to live most of their lives in their communities, and they are the future managers of their art centres.

When people feel connected and part of something outside of themselves and their art centres, they are better able to engage within their learning space. We connect art workers with their colleagues in other art centres and with arts professionals and organisations in the wider industry.

In many communities in Central Australia, art centres are one of only a few Aboriginal-owned and governed employers – and in some places they are the only local employer. One of the most important ways you can secure the future of the art centre is to invest in its Aboriginal art workers. The Desart Art Worker Program team are here to help you do that well.

Desart's Art Worker Program offers art workers a customised program that includes:

- **accredited training (four weeks per calendar year), co-designed by Desart and Batchelor Institute and delivered in partnership, leading to Certificate 1 in Business, Certificate 1 in Access to Vocational Pathways and Certificate 1 in Skills for Vocational Pathways**
- **non-accredited training, including workshops in photography and the SAM database, usually delivered onsite at the art centre**
- **information about workplace rights and obligations**
- **support to develop career pathways**
- **curatorial workshops**
- **industry engagement partnerships.**

Desart's Joanne Silvertown delivering SAM training to Art Worker Beth Inkamala, at Hermannsburg Pottery. Image: Desart.



SAM (STORIES ART MONEY) DATABASE

SAM (Stories Art Money) is an online artwork management system that Desart developed for art centres. Desart owns the software, which is now used by most art centres within its membership, as well as most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art centres across Australia..

SAM is the administrative tool that you and the art centre's art workers will use every day: to catalogue and label art works, document their provenance, do sales and consignment transactions, issue certificates of authenticity and artist biographies, control the art centre's stock, and facilitate online purchases. SAM integrates with financial software (MYOB, QuickBooks and Xero), so you'll use it for financial

management of the art centre, including payments to artists. It has unique and flexible reporting capabilities that enable you to access reliable data to monitor the art centre's sustainability, and use with the art centre's directors, and for strategic and operational planning, business cases, funding applications, and reports and acquittals.

Check out the SAM section on pp. 93–5 for more information about SAM, including free SAM training for Desart members, how to get the best out of the database, and how to trouble-shoot.

Sandra Brown using SAM at Mwerre Anthurru Artists (Bindi). Image: Rhett Hammerton, Desart.



MAJOR DESART EVENTS

In addition to its regular workshops and training sessions for members, Desart invests in several major events in Alice Springs.

Check your calendar and lock in these annual dates now:

Desart Art Centre Conference: the week leading up to the Easter long weekend

Desart Mob: early September

Desart Photography Prize: advised annually.

Desart subsidises member art centres' travel and accommodation costs to promote equitable access to these events. When you're developing and monitoring the art centre's budgets, aim to factor in travel costs (including travel allowance) for a group of staff, directors and artists to attend.

Desart Art Centre Conference

This is an annual two-day event for art centre managers, directors, artists and art workers. It's a great opportunity to connect and engage with each other and with Desart staff, guest speakers, and staff of government agencies and supporting organisations. It is an excellent platform for peer-to-peer learning and access to industry consultants and experts.

The conference program is designed to offer art centre staff and directors culturally safe spaces to celebrate and share their successes and experiential

learnings, and to discuss and work towards solutions to pressing issues. You can expect to join in conversations about local concerns, relevant policy decisions, legislative changes, and global trends. You will be able to meet face-to-face with funders and other decision-makers, and strengthen your networks so that you're better supported once you're all back at the art centre.

Desart Mob

The annual Desart mob event is presented in partnership by Desart and the Araluen Arts Centre. It began its life as the Central Australian Aboriginal Art and Craft Exhibition in 1991. In 1997, the exhibition was renamed the Desert Mob Art Show. Since then it has become, simply, Desert Mob. It is an exhilarating (some say exhausting!) event. There's nothing else like it and it has a well-earned reputation as the annual showcase of the best of current art practice in Central Australian Aboriginal art. Artists and staff representing their art centres bundle into their troop carriers and hit the roads to Alice Springs from Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory to participate in the three-day Desart Mob program. Gallery representatives, journalists, art lovers and collectors travel from around Australia and the world. It is a great opportunity to establish networks and nurture commercial relationships, and it is the annual highlight of many art centres' schedules.

Vincent Namatjira from Iwantja Arts opening Desert Mob 2017. Image: James Henry, Desart.





*Desert Mob 2017 opening at Araluen Arts Centre.
Image: James Henry, Desart.*

The exhibition is unique in that artists and art centres choose the works they exhibit at the Araluen Arts Centre, and familiar in that it has been held annually in Alice Springs for over 25 years. The event includes the Desert Mob Symposium, and an affordable marketplace.

Desert Mob Exhibition

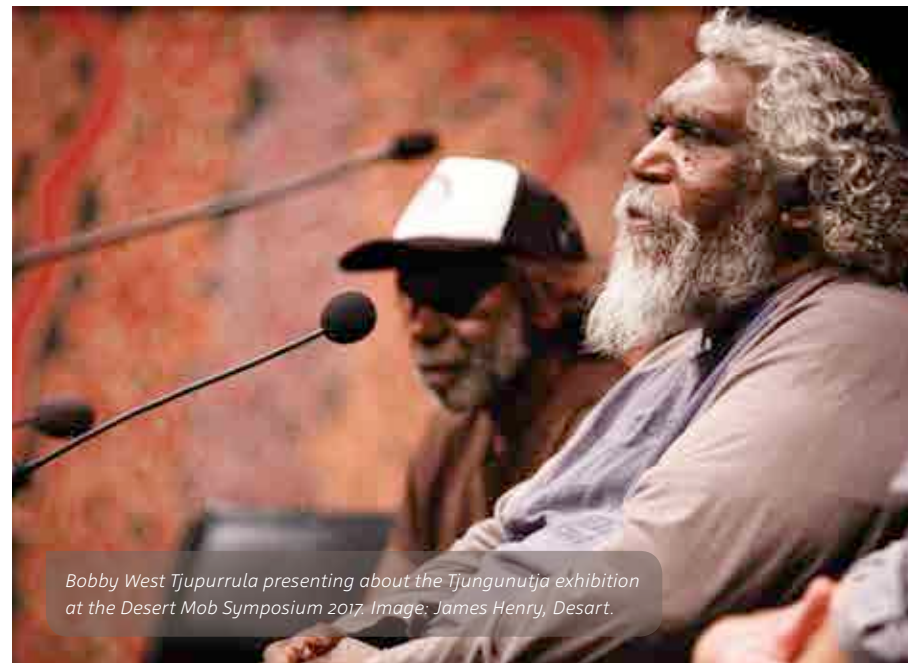
The highly regarded Desert Mob exhibition is facilitated by the Araluen Arts Centre. Participation is open only to members of Desart and is by invitation. Each art centre curates a small exhibition revealing the best of recent work by its artists. As an art centre manager, you might support art workers to curate their art centre's show and maximise this exhibition opportunity to launch emerging artists

or a new medium, style, project or narrative.

Araluen emails its Desert Mob Exhibition contracts to Desart-member art centres and selects artwork to be featured in the exhibition catalogue around April each year.

In May, catalogue artwork has to be delivered and stories are commissioned, and by early July participating artists and art centres submit their list of Desert Mob artworks and certificates of authenticity. The deadline for delivery of Desert Mob artwork is late July.

The exhibition opens on a Thursday evening in early September, with proud celebratory speeches and performances, and a feast for artists and art workers. Enormous queues of keen collectors and buyers form at the doors of the gallery



*Bobby West Tjupurrula presenting about the Tjungunutja exhibition
at the Desert Mob Symposium 2017. Image: James Henry, Desart.*

hours beforehand and the rush when the doors open is the stuff of legends.

Desert Mob Symposium – Stories from the artists

The Desert Mob Symposium literally invites Aboriginal artists onto the stage at Araluen Arts Centre to tell stories about their work and their art centres. They present to a receptive audience, including lots of their colleagues and family members.

This Desart initiative was the first of its kind in Australia. It offers audiences a window into the Aboriginal art centre world and the artists at its centre, and it is a fantastic forum for connecting artists with existing and new audiences and for building the art centre's public profile. It also continues to be a great training opportunity in public speaking

for artists, and directors and art workers.

Desart contacts art centres in March/April to see who would like to present at the Desert Mob Symposium. We offer a fee and professional development for presenters. Presenters also have an opportunity to rehearse at Araluen the day before the Symposium. Desart curates the program, which includes guest artists. Excellent company is guaranteed! (Past guests include Reko Rennie, Jonathon Jones, Julie Gough, and artists of Bábbarra Women's Centre.)

The Symposium is a free, ticketed event for which registration is essential. Desart caters a Symposium lunch that is free for artists and art centre staff.



Desert Mob MarketPlace

The Desert Mob MarketPlace is the go-to market in the nation for affordable Central Australian Aboriginal art and products. It is a large indoor/outdoor market, usually with around 30+ art centres selling. This event takes place on the Saturday of Desert Mob.

This marketplace is an excellent avenue to sell smaller or discounted artwork. There is an upper price limit, distinguishing it from the exhibition market. The art centres that sell the most are those that offer affordable and easily transportable works. Plan your stall well with the art workers so you have an energetic sales team at the ready with all the right tools – and remember that people love an opportunity to meet and talk with artists and art workers. Participating art

L to R: Jackie Williams, Leslie Rigot, Ribnga Green, Geraldine Nowee and Frances Nowee from Warlayirti Artists at Desert Mob MarketPlace 2017. Image: James Henry, Desart.

centres are encouraged to host popular workshops for visitors and buyers.

Keep your energy levels up with food and coffee available from stalls and the café in the grounds of Araluen.

TIP: It is the job of the art centre manager to be strategic in the selection of works for the Desert Mob Exhibition and MarketPlace. Remember not to confuse your markets: if you're planning on offering heavily discounted works by artists who also feature in the highly regarded Desert Mob Exhibition or in concurrent shows in Alice Springs, think again.



Pamela Hogan, Art Worker from Papulankutja Artists at Desert Mob MarketPlace 2016. Image Jeremy Blincoe, Desart.

Desart Photography Prize **THE DESART TEAM**

Since 2012, Desart's professional development programs have included popular photography workshops delivered by professional photographers. The workshops are usually held in community and they focus on the technical aspects of photography. Art workers (and managers) can acquire new skills in photography that are essential to fundamental art centre activities. For art workers, there is the bonus of cross-overs to artistic practice.

The annual Desart Photography Prize was proposed by art workers at Desart's conference in 2011. It celebrates the art of photography by members and art workers of Desart's membership. The prize exhibition is staged in Alice Springs. Opportunities for curatorial skills development for art workers are integrated with the prize.

Winners of the Desart Photography Prize include Rosearanna Larry (Ikuntji Artists), Rhonda Dick (Tjala Arts) and Robert Fielding (Mimili Maku Arts). Desart Photography Prize shows have been exhibited beyond Alice Springs at Alcaston Gallery in Melbourne, the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair, and in South Korea.

The Desart team is a resource that collectively has extensive experience working with Aboriginal communities, primarily in the arts. We are all passionate about the arts and putting culture at the centre of what we do. We value learning and sharing knowledge, and we're continuing to build our expertise and better help bring about positive changes. Our accumulation of corporate knowledge working specifically with art centres in Central Australia is gleaned from over 25 years in operation. Desart staff are directed by a full Aboriginal board of directors, who represent the membership.

Contact us – our program teams are here to assist you over the phone, email or Skype, and we can make on-site visits during critical times.

There are no stupid questions – you don't know what you don't know.

Now let's take a close-up look at the art centre operational model: What is it? How does it work?

*Winner, Desart Photography Prize 2016:
Traditional Inma (The Dance of Many Tribes)
by Rhonda Unrupa Dick.
Image courtesy: the artist and Tjala Arts.*



Tilau Nangala painting at Papunya Tjupi.
Image: Rhett Hammerton, Desart.



Art centre operations

Art centres are complex businesses with competing demands across a broad base. Managers sometimes feel as though they are expected to be: art experts, salespeople, community development specialists, admin dynamos, mediators, social welfare providers, graphic designers, accountants, mechanics and more!

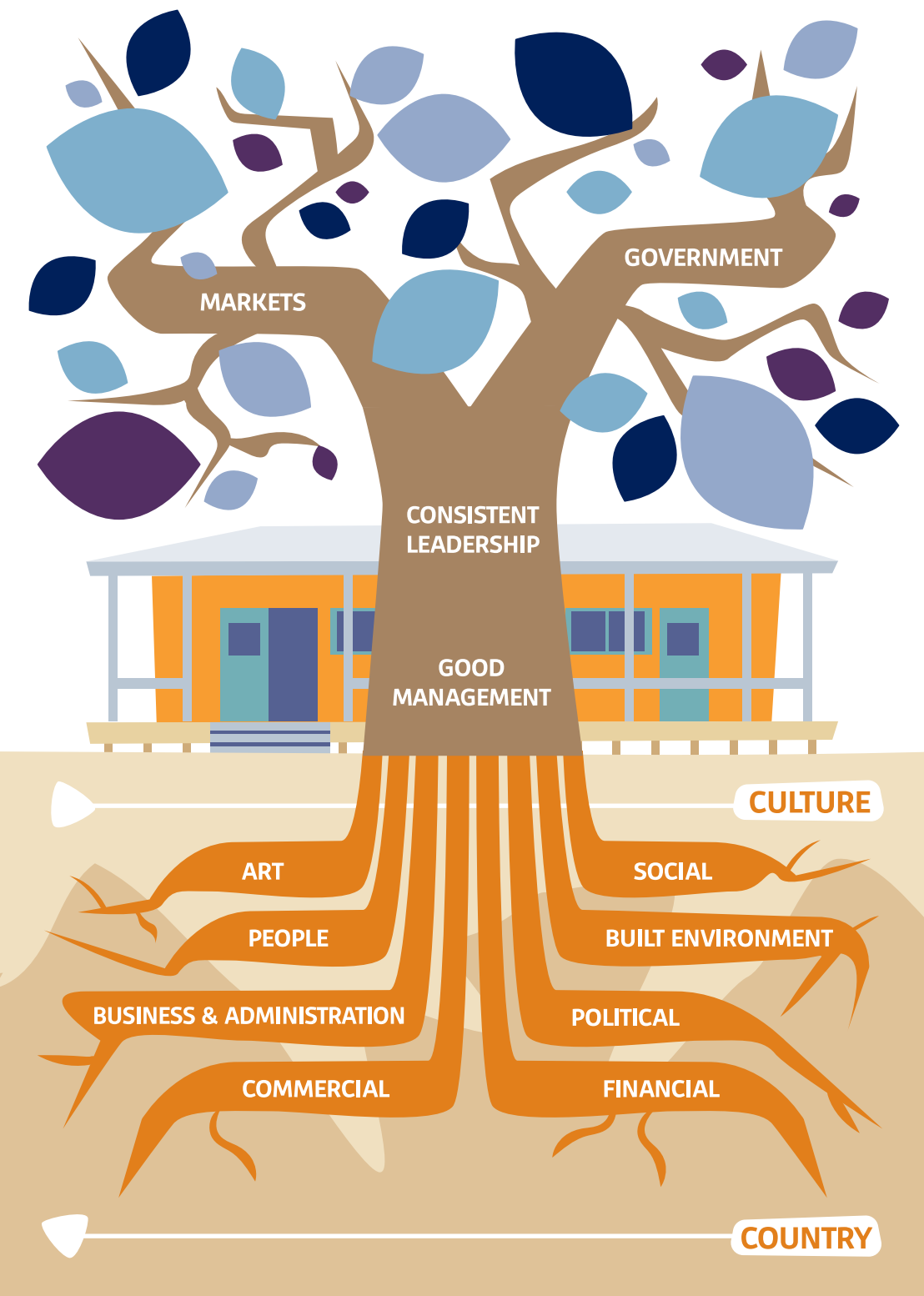
How do you balance the key areas of an art centre business?

Splitting the business into ten areas may help – Desart program staff work with this framework.²

The ten operational areas of an art centre:

- Culture
- Country
- Art
- People
- Business and administration
- Commercial (sales & marketing)
- Financial
- Political
- Built environment
- Social.

² This approach has been adapted from Cornelia and Jan Flora's work on community capital. See *Rural Communities*, 5th edn, CB Flora, JL Flora and SP Gasteyer, Westview Press, 2016.



Think about a big tree growing under the art centre. There are two healthy branches on the tree: the government and the market. Eight roots grow up from culture and country deep underground. The tree provides shelter to the art centre and keeps it secure. Each of its roots can grow strong through consistent leadership, taking up opportunities and good management. Alternatively, these roots may wither through not managing risk, ignoring problems, becoming uprooted from culture and country, and from working the wrong way.

Desart uses this planning approach to frame conversations with directors and staff about art centres. We explore each area one at a time and ask a range of questions:

What does this area mean at the art centre?

What does it look like?

Where or to whom do you go to find out more information on this area? (For example, the chairperson for culture, the accountant or bookkeeper for a money story, or a gallery for feedback on art.)

How do you know what work you need to do in this area? What will have an impact? What hasn't worked? What is better practice? What do other art centres do?

All areas intersect and impact each other:

- commercial reputation affects finances
- political power can affect the built environment
- art affects economy.

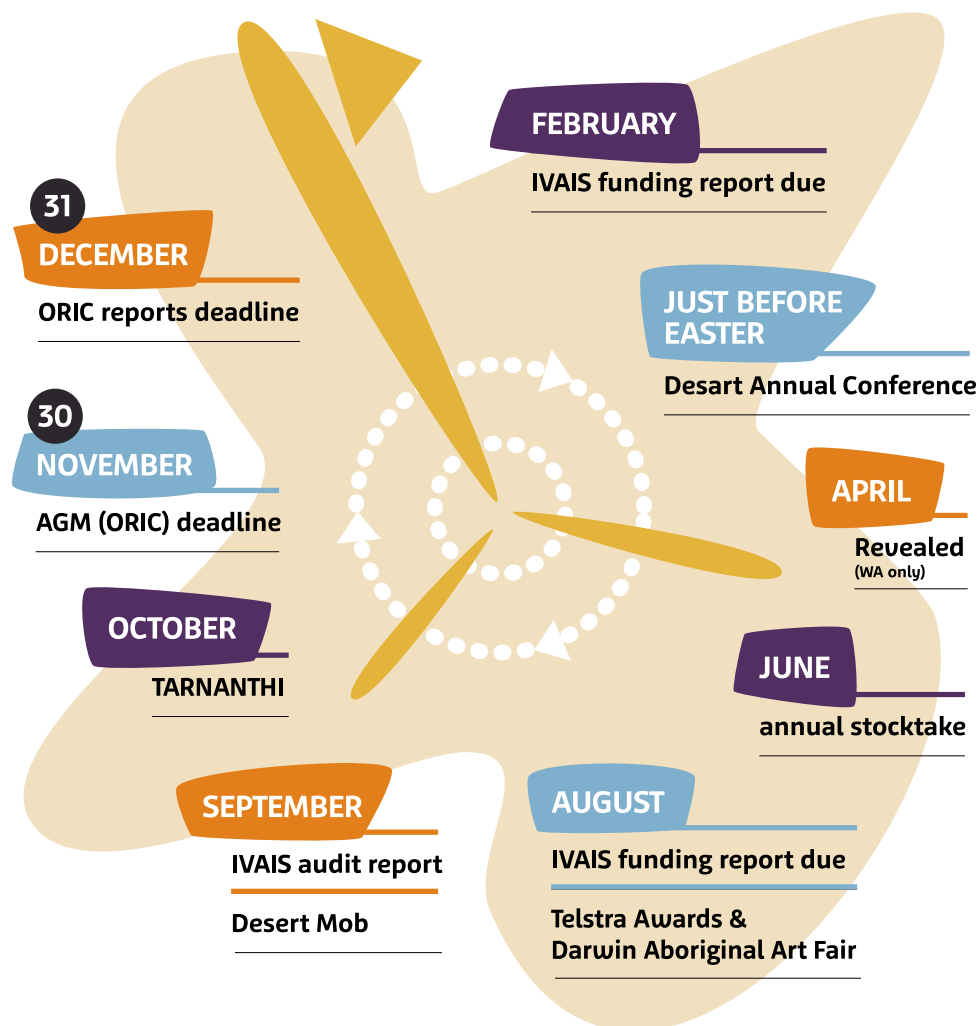
Add your own key areas if they don't fit into the ten described. Use plain English to describe them, but don't change technical terms so that they lose their meaning. After enquiring about each area, label them red, yellow or green like traffic lights. Green symbolises 'go', yellow 'waiting' and red means 'stopped'. Then list:

- the most important things to do
- who is responsible
- how you will know it has been done.

This creates a work plan and usually takes a day or two.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Culture	Country	Art	People	Business & Admin	Commercial	Financial	Political	Social	Built environment
Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Yellow

The traffic light system inspired by Graeme Andrews of Nexia



Basic annual calendar for many art centres that are members of Desert.

1. CULTURE

Culture first. The first art centre operational area is culture. Culture, along with country, is the foundation of art centres. Culture and country underpin everything.

How do you assess the art centre's success in this area?

'It is up to directors and elders to define this area at the art centre.'

They said it. Leave it up to your directors to find a way. Encourage and support them to tell you. Explore with them how to embed a 'culture first' approach to the art centre's operations.

'Trips to country are the most important art centre activity in this area.'

*Tjarlirli artists' bush trip, 2015.
Image: Nyssa Miller, Tjarlirli Art.*

In addition to bush trips, actions in this key area might include: supporting an organisational culture that recognises Aboriginal ways of knowing and authority, using governance processes that foreground local languages, working with young people so knowledge can be shared intergenerationally, documenting artworks to the highest standards, and including Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) clauses in contracts.

The directors and artists will shape your learning and knowledge of their culture. The rest of this section offers guidance on working and living on Aboriginal country with Aboriginal people in Central Australia.



Cultural safety: Please check your bags!

CARA KIRKWOOD AND
ROBYN FRANCES HIGGINS

Imagine you've stepped onto a plane and you are going on a trip to a place that is foreign to you. Your belongings are in a small but very full backpack. It is crammed with all the ideas, thoughts, experiences, emotions, biases, privileges, disadvantages, and status that you've so far accumulated in your life plus those attached to you by association from your families, broader communities and societies at large. In fact, in this deceptively 'heavy for its size' bag, you will be carrying things that you forgot you even packed and things you didn't even know you owned.

All these things will have a profound impact on you and everyone you work with in your new role at a remote art centre. We all have such a bag (this is our cultural identity) and – like any airport security check will tell you – it is vitally important to know what is in your own bag when you travel to other people's countries.

This may all sound obvious, and of course on one level it is, but it is also the most critical thing to be aware of in your work.

When you step off the plane, with your eyes wide, you will be eager to

help propel an ancient culture to new national and global art markets...and this is wonderful. It is, after all, why the art centre directors have employed you. However, how you go about this is what matters most.

Engaging in the principles of cultural safety³ will, over time, create better relationships and truer progress.

As explained above, the departure point for culturally safe practice is **critical self-reflection**. This process helps us to develop an increasing awareness of how our own worldview and consequent actions may affect others and their own cultural identity.

Ask yourself some of these questions:

- What cultural norms do I bring to my life and expect from others?
- Do my expectations belong here?
- How are my norms and expectations affecting my thoughts, behaviours and actions? And in turn, how are these affecting those I work with?
- What are the differences between my cultural experience and identity and those of the people who have employed me?
- Do our cultures need to look and be the same? (If you've answered 'yes' to this question, pick up your heavy backpack and go home, immediately – no, we are not joking.)
- Between cultures and indeed

individuals, what are our shared values?

- How can we work together on our shared values whilst being mindful of difference?

Cultural differences and similarities are important to identify through **engaged communication**. Working to continue to develop your skills in both verbal and non-verbal communication with a focus on listening and observing (more so than telling and showing) is instrumental in strengthening your professional practice in this context.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Am I genuinely trying to understand another's point of view with curiosity, not judgement?
- What am I assuming? Am I making sure that I ask rather than presume?
- Am I generalising what I have heard and understood from one person and applying it to the whole community without foundation?
- Who am I enabling to make decisions? Myself, the board of directors or artists?
- What is going unsaid? What is not being made space for? What am I NOT noticing?
- How is power impacting on effective communication in this context?

Taking the time to further develop understanding of historical, social and political contexts and how power operates similarly and differently in each new context will assist you to **minimise power imbalances** in your work.

Ask yourself these questions:

- What power do I have in this role? How does it change in different contexts? What actions can I take to ensure this is equitable?
- How am I contributing to power imbalances in the industry? Whose voices are being heard and whose are being left out? Whose needs are being met and whose are sidelined?
- Who are the most important people in this process/decision/activity? (Am I getting in the way?)
- Is a power imbalance affecting consent or agreement in this decision-making process?
- Am I taking action with consent? Am I remembering that consent and agreements are not always fixed, are conditional, and that these decisions need to be revisited regularly?

Recognising that language, processes and structures are influenced by cultural bias can assist you in **decolonising your practice** as much as possible. In your work as an art centre staff person, you will straddle a lot of worlds and will need to maintain a precarious balance between them.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Why am I doing this job? Because I want meaningful work? Because I aspire to sharing a vision? To feel good about myself? To be the 'expert', 'hero' or 'convert'...?
- What processes, structures and languages am I giving preference to and enabling through my work? Do they reinforce domination or control of one cultural group over another?
- How am I working with my employers to contest dominant cultural ways

3 Cultural safety is a concept that came from the health sector and was developed by Maori health professionals in Aotearoa. Cultural safety is activated through principles. These principles (in bold throughout this text) have been adapted from *Health Care and Indigenous Australians: Cultural Safety in Practice* (2nd edition), Taylor & Guerin (2014, p.15), as summarised from the work of Maori academic Irihapeti Ramsden.

of thinking, behaving and acting to challenge the sector to decolonise? (Think of the ways interpretation, representation, and appropriation of First Peoples' art occurs.)

How much am I enabling the cultural authority of community to thrive and how much am I imposing a way of being that I think should be occurring? Finally, whether your practice is culturally safe or not is determined by those you work with, and it is time and context specific. You will never be signed off as 'culturally safe'. There is no script. There is no checklist. There is no certificate. Yet this is an opportunity to engage meaningfully and expansively with others in your work. It is relevant to all contexts and professions and is a useful tool for continuing to develop self-awareness and build increasingly equitable and meaningful relationships.

Cultural protocols

There are many Aboriginal cultural protocols, so don't think that you can learn about a complex knowledge system in a few weeks – or a few years. Read the information that follows. Be yourself (everyone makes cultural faux pas), be discreet and be aware of your own behaviours and those of people around you at all times.

For your work, read and use the Australia Council's Protocols for Working with Indigenous Artists: see www.australiacouncil.gov.au and Arts Law's information sheet about the rights of Aboriginal people for protection of their traditional and cultural knowledge and materials (Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property): <https://www.artslaw.com.au>

*Engawala women preparing for a women's ceremony.
Image: Waltja Tjutanku Palyapayi.*



Words and terms to start you listening

Tjukurpa (Tjukurrpa, Jukurrpa, Altyerre) is a Central Australian word for the law and belief system of Aboriginal people. Tjukurpa embodies the binding connections of language, religion, philosophy, family and human behavior that are to be observed in order to live harmoniously with one another and with the natural environment. According to Tjukurpa, there was a time when ancestral beings, in the form of humans, animals and plants, travelled widely across the land and performed remarkable feats of creation and destruction.

Another important word is 'country', which refers to land generally, but also has the more specific meaning of 'place of belonging'. Country as a word and concept is very important for you to understand – it is where people are from and connected to in the deepest sense of the word and it holds both languages and Tjukurpa.

Humbug

Level 1

Humbug can be as innocent as gently asking for something: 'Could I humbug you for some water?' or 'Could I humbug you for a cup of tea?'.

Level 2

Humbug can be annoying and frustrating – asking for something unreasonable such as access to a vehicle or money, over and over again. Humbug can be family members

bad news – somebody has passed away

big mob – a lot of (big mob of money, big mob of kids)

business – law and ceremony

camp – a group of homes or someone's place (Hidden Valley Town Camp; 'I am stopping at Betty's camp.')

cheeky – mischievous, aggressive, dangerous

gammon – pretending, kidding, joking, fake

growl – scold

humbug – see the explanation below

lingo – Aboriginal language

old man / woman – refers to very old or senior people or people who have passed away; e.g., 'that old man / woman from Alice Springs'.

shame, shame job – causing embarrassment (by pointing someone out, saying their name loudly etc)

sorry business – ceremony and rituals associated with death

toy – not real (toy teeth = false teeth)

harassing artists for their painting money.

Level 3

Humbug can mean violence and harassment, for example, 'I get too much humbug at home' or 'I get too much humbug from drinkers'. Humbug of this nature can have tragic consequences.

Don't take it personally

Work ethics and personal values are not tied together intrinsically in many Aboriginal communities. People do not, generally, seek to be thanked or valued through their job and may not value the same in their art centre manager.

Community members are unlikely to say: 'Wasn't it great the way Jim stayed in and worked over the weekend at the art centre? He's a really hard worker!'

They may be more likely to think: 'Poor Jim, he must be lonely and have no one to go bush with.'

Or maybe even: 'What is Jim doing at the art centre all the time without the artists there? Maybe he's stealing money!'

Conversely, often in communities there is no differentiation between the personal and work. Your private space and work space need to be defined by you. For example: 'I don't talk about money story at home, just at the art centre.' 'You know I don't do humbug on the weekend.'

This is, of course, for you to manage – the verandah at the art centre manager's house can be a great forum for discussing art centre business and getting to know each other, and learning about culture. Alternatively, you could use the chairperson's front yard or do this only at the art centre. It is about finding a balance and being consistent with your boundaries.

'Be consistent. Make clear rules with the artists and board. You can be generous but it must be the same for

everyone. If you break a rule once, you're worth hunting and will be humbugged for months. It will also cause conflict if you break a rule for one person and then say no to the next.'

– Manager, Spinifex Arts Project

Am I an alien?

'You might feel like you are in the middle of nowhere, but other people have lived their entire lives in that place. Seek counsel from Anangu about the way things work, it can be comforting to know that someone is across everything to do with the community and country around you.'

– Manager, Papunya Tjupi

Many art centre managers have used the expressions:

'I feel like an alien.'

'I feel like I'm on another planet.'

'I feel as though we are having two completely different conversations.'

Working in a remote Aboriginal community can be an experience akin to travelling overseas to work in a foreign country in a small community. You are in someone else's country. Take the time to learn the ropes. Learn from the art centre's members and the Desart Cultural Orientation Guide that follows.

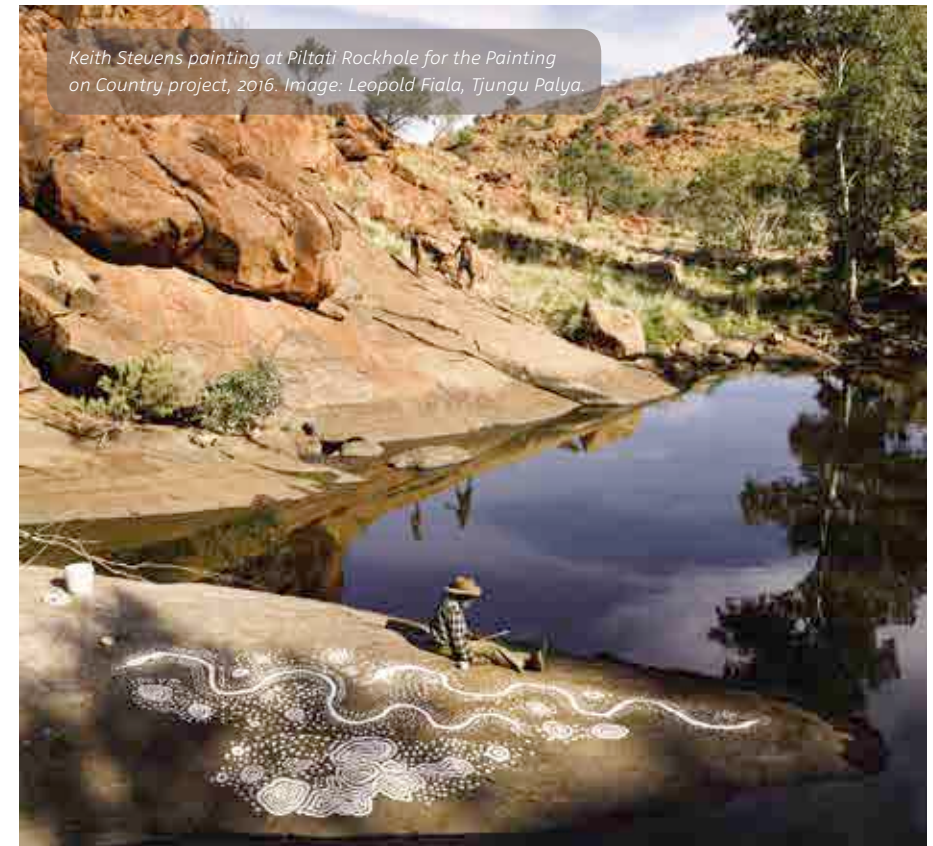
DESART CULTURAL ORIENTATION GUIDE

This cultural orientation guide⁴ is specific to working within an Aboriginal community and covers areas such as personal conduct, appropriate methods of communication and cultural factors you need to consider when you are working in an art centre.

Remember: there are no hard and fast rules. Every cultural group and community is different. The key to being

culturally competent, and being able to do your job successfully in Aboriginal communities, is to:

- **be self-aware**
- **be respectful**
- **be observant and willing to learn**
- **ask for advice and use it.**



Keith Stevens painting at Piltati Rockhole for the Painting on Country project, 2016. Image: Leopold Fiala, Tjunga Palya.

⁴ We thank and acknowledge the Remote Area Health Corps for allowing us to use and adapt parts of its *Cultural Orientation Handbook* for our sector. We've also added to it ourselves.

Your first days working at an art centre

Even other Aboriginal people who travel to different regions have to be aware of the cultural protocols that apply to the particular community they are in. Your first days in an Aboriginal community are important: first impressions can influence your satisfaction in your job, as well as the satisfaction of the people you are working with, and can ultimately impact on professional outcomes.

Spend your first few days being introduced to the members and staff of the art centre. Meet the chairperson and directors first. They will make the right introductions to everyone in the art centre. Meet with the directors and

staff of other community and Aboriginal organisations in the area, too. If people haven't been introduced to you, they might not feel comfortable to come to the art centre or might not interact with you.

The Council Office is usually the central point of information in the community. Make sure you meet the community services manager (or whatever the current term is for this government-appointed position). A good relationship with this person and community office staff is important too.

*Papulankutja (Blackstone Community),
Ngaanyatjarra Lands. Image: Desert.*



Working within the Aboriginal community

Imagine if you lived in a community of 2000 people, many of whom were your family by blood and marriage. You also had a kinship relationship with the other people in the community, and could call every Indigenous person in the community family. In every level of communication and interaction, you would deal with your family, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Empathy and an understanding of cultural issues will help with your work here. All people are complex, all cultural groups are complex, and culture is not the only answer or explanation for some of the issues and personalities you will encounter.

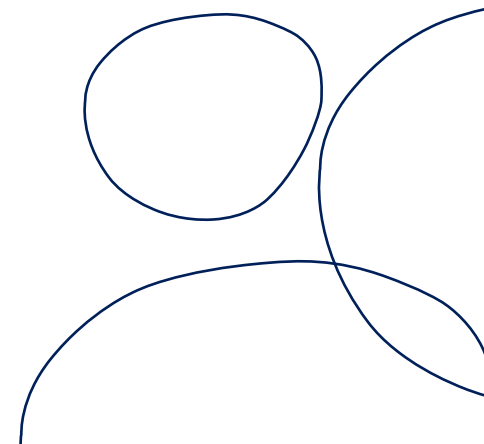
It is easy to have an idealised notion of Aboriginal communities that includes viewing community members as being united in purpose and action and sharing a common culture. These notions don't accommodate the true origin and establishment of such communities.

Many Aboriginal communities across Australia are the result of government policies that saw the displacement of Aboriginal peoples — from differing cultures and languages, many of whom were traditional enemies — from their traditional lands. They then experienced forced segregation on missions and reserves. Later government policies of self-management and self-determination resulted in such missions and reserves being granted a freedom of sorts, with limited autonomy. In this way, they were forced to become

communities in name, despite the lack of voluntary association among members. In many cases, when the artificial infrastructure provided by legislation, regulations and religious evangelism was removed, nothing was substituted in its place. Understanding this as the basis of many Aboriginal communities will help you understand why certain situations have evolved, and why certain issues seem extremely difficult to resolve.

Factionalism and politics

In any small community, some family groupings may be aligned and others may be long-standing antagonists, often resulting in factionalism. Entrenched factionalism may not be remediable. Factions will not be readily identified by a newcomer. Take care not to be perceived as taking sides. Providing particular services, funds or resources for one faction and not for others (even if unintentional) can result in community members assuming you are aligned with a certain faction.



The community's expectations of you

The community expects you to perform your role as an arts professional. This includes dressing, speaking and generally conducting yourself in a manner in keeping with the role, and having the knowledge and expertise expected of your profession. You are also expected to be sensitive and empathic, and to recognise, honour and respect the vibrancy of another culture.

The following values serve as a sound guide for cross-cultural communication:

Spirit and integrity – a respect for the spirit and integrity of all cultures, communities and individuals.

Reciprocity – full recognition of the involvement and contributions of stakeholders, a dedication to the feedback of meaningful results, and the assurance of fair outcomes for communities and individuals involved.

Respect – acknowledgement and affirmation of the inherent diversity that exists within cultures and communities, and a commitment to inclusive consultation and involvement.

Equality – the promotion of distributive fairness and justice, affirming the right of individuals, communities and cultures to be different.

Responsibility – to ensure that all practice is transparent and accountable, and will result in no harm to the individuals and communities involved.

The community rightly expects you to work with them in partnership.

Living in a small community

Some of the issues you may find hard to deal with might in fact be related to remote culture, as opposed to Aboriginal culture. Remote and rural Aboriginal communities have the usual characteristics of small towns – community concerns and gossip run rife. However, in Aboriginal communities these characteristics are magnified as the spotlight is on all outsiders. Assume that every action, whether private or public, is the topic of community conversation.

Adjusting to your role

Remember that you are there to do a particular job, not to become a member of the community. You may encounter situations where you wish to intervene, change or control matters, or act as you might do in your usual environment. It is important that you step back.

How you react and respond to particular situations that are either beyond people's direct control (living conditions, environment, poverty), or related to cultural beliefs and protocols ('sorry' business actions) may result in people feeling you are judging them or betraying their trust in you.

Consider the implications your actions may have on the community as a whole. Respect the community's decisions and activities as much as possible.



Arrernte men performing at Desert Mob Dancesite 2015.
Image: Hannah Millerick, Desart.

Understand cultural factors and how they impact your work

Take the time to read and learn about the Aboriginal community you are working in: the language groups, kinships systems, historical factors, demographics, services and organisations and current issues within the region. Develop a basic understanding of how to respond appropriately to cultural factors such as how birth and death are viewed and dealt with in the community.

Art centre members, especially senior people with cultural authority, are a source of great knowledge about the local community. Work towards establishing trust and credibility – go out regularly and have contact with community members so people get to know you. Keep promises and always ask permission before branching out in

any way or doing something you are not sure about.

Kinship avoidance relationships are important for you to understand – don't ask loudly, 'Hey, Joyce, why won't you come here and sit next to Jimmy?' Understand that there are some people who can be near each other and some who can't.

Aboriginal culture is gendered. If there is a topic or area for discussion that is taboo for women, or for men only, people may say 'I don't know' or be silent. Read this as a subtle indication to stop asking.

There may be many reasons why someone walks away or removes themselves from a meeting or situation – be respectful, and don't take it personally.

Papunya Tjupi artists and family dancing at Desert Mob Dancesite 2015. Image: Hannah Millerick, Desart.



Aboriginal kinship

All people in all cultures have some form of kinship system that governs their lives. Kinship encompasses the norms, roles, institutions and cognitive processes referring to all of the social relationships that people are born into or create later in life, and their expression.

Among Aboriginal people in Australia, this social structure links people and all aspects of country: everything has a place and there is a place for everything. The moon and stars, men and women, plants and animals, country and places are all assigned to the kinship system. Storms, droughts and the like are also manifest in the kinship system. Every part of life and every interaction is governed by the rules and norms of kinship, and every plant, animal and part of country is family to someone who has a reciprocal responsibility to care for it. Kinship governs who can be spoken to, who has to be avoided, who has specific responsibilities and obligations, who guides, who teaches, who marries whom, and who attends to 'passing away' ceremonies.

Don't be discouraged by the complexity of kinship. Understanding family connections and how kinship functions in day-to-day life is enough.

Learn how to appropriately work alongside the kinship system. Take guidance from the chairperson of your art centre, the Traditional Owners (TOs) and custodians of the community and the artists themselves. Read up – there should be resources at the art centre, and information about kinship on the Central Land Council's website is a

starting point: <https://www.clc.org.au/index.php?/articles/info/aboriginal-kinship>

Where do you fit in?

Maybe you don't!

If a non-Aboriginal person is around an Aboriginal culture for an extended period, they may be placed in the kinship network. Being given a skin name does not mean you have been adopted in the Western sense. And you certainly haven't been initiated. You have though, however inadvertently, taken a side in community politics / relationships that might impact on your role as a member of the art centre's team. To be placed within the kinship network means sharing in the same way that you would in any other close relationship. But your new kinship relationships may come with expectations that you'll adhere to protocols such as those associated with avoidance relationships.

Ask for and use advice

Always ask for advice in any situation where you are not confident regarding the appropriate methods for proceeding. Ask: 'What is the best way for me to do this?' People will always be happy to teach you. Return the favour by ensuring you listen to the advice and put it into practice. When in doubt about anything – no matter how small or insignificant it seems to you – ask someone: a director, art worker, artist, or other Aboriginal community member.

Community events and initiatives

Attending, participating in and supporting community events can help increase your familiarity with community members, establish trust and credibility, and help you get to know the community and what's going on. Always check first with someone such as an Aboriginal art worker to ensure your presence at particular events will be appropriate and welcome, and importantly, that it will not be unwittingly offensive, or align you too closely with particular factions within the community.

Address community priorities

It is important that as part of the relationship and partnership you are building with the art centre and the community, you give attention to the issues they see as a priority, rather than trying to address the issues you see as most urgent. This is essential to supporting self-determination.

Personal presentation and conduct

A lot of art centre managers socialise in the community, in a gradual way. The best way to start is by joining people for a cup of tea.

Some general tips on conduct include:

- DO treat people gently, both physically and emotionally.
- DO greet people respectfully and speak softly.

- DO act politely and demonstrate an interest in people and the community through recognition – a smile, a wave, a small sign.
- DO conduct your private life in a discreet manner.
- DO observe others when communicating and take their lead, particularly regarding shaking hands and eye contact.
- DO ask for advice in any given situation where you are unsure of what to do or how to act – people will be happy to teach you.
- DO NOT be impatient or raise your voice with anybody – particularly older people or children.
- DO NOT speak harshly to someone who is drunk – speak to them in the same manner you would a sober person.
- DO NOT bad mouth or enter into gossip about anyone in the community.
- DO NOT swear around anyone in the community.
- DO NOT drink alcohol in alcohol-free (dry) areas.
- DO NOT use illegal substances.
- DO NOT assume that you know everything. No one is fond of people who talk too much about their assumed knowledge and try to 'big note' themselves. This is particularly the case in regards to assumed knowledge about Aboriginal peoples and cultures.



Safety

- Always take your personal safety and security as seriously as you would anywhere else.
- Ask for advice on safe routes and places to walk that won't take you anywhere near sacred sites or other off-limit places.
- Be careful of dogs, but also be respectful of dogs as they are an integral part of family life.
- Be careful moving around the community at night: there may be no street lights. Drive slowly.
- Always let other people know where you are going.

How to dress

There are many places with cultures and customs that might be different from your own. The customs and protocols of Aboriginal communities across Australia

Artists Mulyatingki Marney and Doreen Chapman showing Martumili Field Officer Sanchia Scott how to collect lunki (witchetty grubs) at Yulpu, 2017. Image: Emma Franklin, Martumili Artists.

vary dramatically. The community where you are may reasonably expect you to dress in a way that reflects your role as art centre manager. What you wear is particularly important when with older members of the community, and in the company of members of the opposite sex.

Take note of what other people are doing and wearing, and dress similarly. For women, this doesn't mean that you have to wear a bright floral skirt or dress, but it may mean that you should cover up your hips and knees and not wear anything too tight. For men, footy shorts are strictly for the footy field and going shirtless can be perceived as having 'no shame' in mixed company. Long loose shorts and a top are good as bathers.

What to bring out bush

Desert and art centre staff will assist you with information about the accommodation facilities and shopping opportunities in the community. Most communities have their own local store stocked with popular food and items, and fresh groceries are usually trucked in weekly. You might be able to buy coconut water, chickpeas and tofu if there's a demand for them. But you might not. If there's something you can't live without, bring it with you. Some major stores offer a bush order service – ask Desert staff for information.

Be prepared for weather extremes. Even though Central Australia is renowned for hot sunny weather most of the time, it can have very cold overnight temperatures and occasional drenching downpours. Pack appropriate clothing for the community, climate, and work. You'll need to have suitable gear for everything from bush camping to exhibition openings to ministerial meetings.

Aboriginal languages

'Learn our language: listening, looking, speaking, reading. Tjukutjuku!'
– Tuppy Goodwin, Mimili Maku Artists

Over 250 languages (and many more dialects) were spoken before the European invasion. The 2016 census revealed about 170 of these are currently spoken. As an art centre manager, you will be working with many people for whom English is not a first language, nor the language of the country on

which you are living and working. Some people say country only hears its own language.

Languages and dialects of Central Australia include: Alyawarr, Anmatyerre, Arrernte (Central, Eastern, Western and Southern), Kaytetye, Kukatja, Luritja, Ngaanyatjarra, Ngaatjatjarra, Pintupi, Pitjantjatjara, Wambaya, Warlmanpa, Warlpiri, Warumungu and Yankunytjatjara.

Nationally, Western Desert and Arandic languages are in the top five Indigenous languages spoken at home. Remember that, among older people especially, English may be a third or fourth language.

Signing is a commonly used part of most languages. Don't assume the hand signals you usually use mean the same thing in the community. You might unwittingly be signalling you think someone is sexy or that something is boring!

Take the time to learn at least the basics of the main language people speak. There is a growing body of excellent learning resources and also language school classes and summer intensives, and there might be people in the community willing to teach you and others interested in learning. Be sure to negotiate fair payment.

Communication

Always observe others and follow their lead, particularly in regard to shaking hands and eye contact. These protocols differ among cultural groups and even Aboriginal people visiting other regions watch and learn from others.



Nyukumpa the jarntu (dog), in the art shed in Parnngurr Community, 2017, Image: Emma Franklin, Martumili Artists.

In some communities, shaking hands is inappropriate for general greetings as it has a specific meaning in traditional life, notably used during sorry business. To shake hands as a general greeting can shame an Aboriginal person. It is important to note that some Aboriginal people will offer their hand despite it being inappropriate, as they may feel it is expected of them.

Eye contact may also be inappropriate, and avoiding eye contact can be a sign of respect. This is often misinterpreted by non-Aboriginal people in authority as inattentiveness. Lack of eye contact may also be about power or lack of power, and due to factors common to us all, such as personality, shame and distrust. Observe others and take their lead. Take care to avoid staring at someone, particularly of the opposite sex. Look past the person, as opposed to

directly at them, to avoid making them feel uncomfortable.

Always greet people respectfully, and speak softly but clearly. Take note of appropriate terms of address for people. If you are unsure, discreetly ask someone else.

Addressing people as Mr or Mrs and using their family name only is seen as being very respectful and will not cause the issues that using a first name can. For example, the first name may be the same as that of a recently deceased person. In some communities, the name of a deceased person, and others who share the same name, is not to be spoken for a certain period of time after their passing. In some communities, it may be expected that you call people by their skin name, as opposed to their first name.

Remember many Aboriginal people feel intimidated in dealings with non-Aboriginal people, particularly those in positions of authority.

Be aware of personal space. Distancing yourself or getting too close may be misinterpreted as coldness, inappropriately intimate or pushy. The gender of the person is an important factor in how personal space is used.

If you start having issues with your communication, suggest a bush trip – pile in the troopy and go and learn about country. Step back and take a look at yourself in the picture.

Silence

For many Aboriginal people silence is a part of their communication style. Silence can be used as a form of respect, contemplation, disagreement, or to allow time to reflect and consider. If people aren't speaking up, don't assume they don't have an opinion or that their concerns aren't important or urgent.

People may be quite happy to sit and, aside from the occasional comment, there is no obligation to keep the conversation flowing. For those used to interactions that have a particular social or professional focus, being able to relax and accept such silences can be difficult. The best way to deal with this is to sit back and listen, learn to relax with silences and tune into the speech patterns and idioms of the community.

Informed consent

Don't push for agreement or take silence as compliance. Many meetings held in communities are frustrating – model a better way at the art centre.

Make sure you understand what free, prior, informed consent is and how integral it is to people determining their own futures: it is a collective right.

Use meeting processes that achieve effective participation and make sure all information relevant to decision-making is provided in a balanced way and that it is easy for everyone to understand. Don't rely on English; appoint and pay for an interpreter. Remember that supporting informed consent means respecting when people deny consent. If people don't agree, they don't agree and if people need more time to make a decision, then you must allow for this.

Time – go with the flow

We all work differently with different concepts of time. For older Aboriginal people especially, everything they do might be in tune with their existing responsibilities and obligations.

Allow for circular, time-rich processes. Take the time to contextualise art centre work in a meaningful way. Don't just assign to a new art worker the task of writing a catalogue number on a frame. Sit together and step through why artworks are catalogued. Engage them in the full process, including the cataloguing functions of the SAM Database.

Building good relationships takes a lot of time, energy and effort. Culturally, Aboriginal people tend to work with process, whereas Western culture has become outcome-oriented. If requests to do something fit into this order, then they will be done. If there is no understood meaning or purpose, then

the chances are a person will neither turn up for a meeting nor carry out the duties in their job description.

Healthy relationships

While it's important to build effective inter-cultural relationships, it's likely not everyone will be your friend. Conflict will inevitably arise even within the best of relationships. Healthy relationships tolerate difference and negotiate consensus and are able to cope with conflict because these relationships provide an environment that allow it to safely occur. How you respond to and resolve conflicts and disputes, not the details, is important. See p. 83 for more information.

Taking and using photographs

Don't take random happy snaps of everyone and everything you see. Be aware of sacred sites around the community that will be off limits to you. Taking photos of these sites without permission will be strictly forbidden. Taking photos of children without the permission of parents or carers is a big no in any culture. Be polite: always ask permission before you take photographs of people, homes or campsites. Just as you might not like someone coming into your home and taking photos of your family and your belongings without permission, it is the same for Aboriginal people. Check your contract, permit and the art centre's policies (especially for social media) before you start snapping and posting. See p. 92 for more info.

Reciprocity and boundaries

Functional Aboriginal culture has a basic commitment to sharing. It occurs within the kinship network, and is typically seen in child rearing, food distribution, ceremonial obligations and housing arrangements. No one can be denied access to sharing. Each person reciprocates so no one has the full responsibility to provide all needs. Sharing brings with it associated obligations and responsibilities.

It's important that you act naturally and adapt the protocols and etiquette you know from your own culture. Think of the way you would like to be treated in any of your own close relationships. All relationships have boundaries. It is all right to say 'no' in a respectful or roundabout way. You could say: 'let me think about that' or 'maybe tomorrow'. Everyone's boundaries are different, and it will be very necessary for you to define yours while living in the community. Don't feel guilty: setting boundaries is crucial to avoiding burn-out, and people are very resourceful.

Working with elders

Elders are people within the Aboriginal community who have earned status within that community for their knowledge and experience. Elders are to be shown total respect. Old age is considered to be the time for wisdom. Children often go to older people for advice, comfort, affection or storytelling. Elders have a very important role in Aboriginal families. They are often the key decision-makers.

They teach important skills and customs, pass on cultural knowledge and Law, and share personal stories.

It is especially important to be respectful when working with elders.

Dying, death and 'sorry' business

Place of death

Many Aboriginal people feel strongly about their place of death and who cares for them. They prefer to go home to die, to be on their own country and with family rather than die in hospital a long way away. A smoking ceremony may be held within a place where someone has died and places they frequented, to cleanse and help the person's spirit move on. The family of a relative who has died in the family home may move out of the house, and may even go to another community.

Death

When a death occurs, the person is generally referred to in English as having 'passed away'. Traditionally, the name of the deceased is now not to be used. It may be permissible to write the name down but not speak it. To refer to the deceased person to other family members you could say 'your father', 'your brother', 'your uncle', or whatever the relationship may be. Most language groups have terms that denote that someone has passed away. Depending on where you are, you might hear Kwementyaye, Kumana etc.

While everyone is clearly grieving, it is also often a time to divert the pain

of the loss through humour and tales of special memories – the love, jokes, adventures and trials they shared. Many Aboriginal people will travel great distances to attend funerals and will be expected to do so even for deaths outside their immediate network. Not to do so would be disrespectful and result in shame.

Activities and services within the community may be cancelled, postponed or closed on the day someone dies. If an artist from the art centre passes away, the directors may request that the art centre be closed for some days or weeks. Take direction from the directors. You may still be allowed to work in a back office, but Aboriginal people may not. Pay due respect: it may be appropriate to help the family produce a booklet for the funeral service, write a eulogy etc.

Before the funeral, grieving relatives are supported by the community to ensure those most affected are looked after with enough to eat and enough sleep. After the funeral, a similar network of support and comfort is provided. Large groups may gather to look after those who are grieving to divert them from becoming too distressed and to ensure they have what they need to cope in the times ahead.

There may also be other ceremonies after a person has died. For example, a further ceremony may be held a year later. This may involve a smoking ceremony and the distribution of clothes. In general, it is appropriate for you to quietly acknowledge the loss for the family involved and express your sympathy.

Sorry business

The awful statistics about Aboriginal premature deaths and poor health will all too soon become a very sad reality for you: people are often sick, suffer, pass away. It is a tragic part of art centre work. You will often be called upon to receive and pass on to family condolence and tribute messages and provide access to the computer to make a funeral booklet.

'Sorry' is the time of mourning following the death of an Aboriginal person. The degree and intensity of mourning ceremonies are in direct proportion to the esteem in which the person was held by the community and the level of responsibility that person had. The mourning process is designed to remember, let go of the memory and heal the grief of the community. 'Sorry' can vary in time from days to months or, less commonly now, years.

In some communities, the name of the deceased is never mentioned again. In others, it is not mentioned for a certain period of time. This may also extend to others still living who share the same name. Images of the deceased (and their artwork) may no longer be allowed to be shown. In other communities, it is important to remember the person frequently and to talk about and honour them. Specific family members are responsible for making these decisions.

The signs of 'sorry' (grief and mourning) in a community may include:

- Firstly: a scream, secondly: hitting or cutting oneself (related to the sharing of blood as both a means of sorrow and washing away of sorrow, and

visibly demonstrating how much respect and love you had for the deceased)

- Wailing
- A 'sorry camp' established away from usual living areas
- Quiet singing of ceremony songs
- Hair cutting, which is done in the sorry camp. Often the head is then covered when going about the community
- Extensive use of sign language.

Any communication with a person in 'sorry' must be done through the kinship network. You may or may not be expected to turn up to the sorry camp and shake hands and show respect. Your directors or art workers will guide you.

Traditional healers

A traditional healer, such as a *ngangkari*, is a person who has a recognised skill of healing. This skill is often recognised at birth or during childhood. Their skills are developed by an older healer, resulting in them becoming a fully accredited healer in their own right. The role is honoured and respected by community members. There is no condition – spiritual, emotional, mental or physical – that cannot be referred to a traditional healer.

Dogs

Animal companionship is very important for many Aboriginal people, and dogs have very important traditional associations as hunters and guardians. Dogs are also central to many important Tjurkurpa stories and sites.

The environment, introduced diseases, lack of access to veterinary health services and other factors have led to general poor health of dogs on a lot of Aboriginal communities, and they are associated health risks to people. Some communities have visiting vets or dog health programs. A particularly fantastic program set up by Gloria Morales of Warlukurlangu Artists for Yuendumu is Aussie Desert Dogs. Check it out on Facebook.

Dogs on communities can run in packs more so than in urban and other environments. They can be quite dangerous, especially if you wander onto their turf – so be careful.

- Learn the local way to 'growl' dogs.
- Carry a stick.
- Approach people with caution when their dogs are with them and ask: 'Is that dog cheeky?'.

As in the broader community, a dog is not just for Christmas! Be aware that if you accept or take on a dog, you must be prepared to take the dog with you when you leave. The next art centre manager may have their own pets or not want to take on any canine friends that you have adopted.



Mack by Aileen Adamson, 2017, Greenbush Art Group.
Image: Araluen Arts Centre.

Cross-cultural resources

Explore the Knowledge Bank at the back of this book; the listings include a link to the Remote Area Health Corps *Cultural Orientation Handbook*, which is accessible online.

The next section is about the centrality of country to Aboriginal people – not just for building a house, tourism or mining, but for survival. Activating connection to country through ceremony and other cultural expression, including art, keeps culture strong.

2. COUNTRY

'Country is a very important thing that spans across many different places, not just one. It is through country that we will pass on our culture to future generations, to keep culture strong. We don't have our history/cultural knowledge recorded on paper, it is within us, in us, in everything we do and that is how we pass it on.'

– Mr R. Douglas, former chairperson of Desert and director of Tjala Arts, Amata

For Aboriginal people, country is multidimensional and it has powerful agency: it is both a physical and a cultural landscape. The ancestral spirits or beings who created and changed country and its features and plants and animals, also created Tjukurpa/Jukurrpa/Altyerre (Law), which is what regulates all beings and actions. Respecting and honouring country and supporting how people wish to engage with this fundamental aspect of life is of critical importance to the health and vitality of the art centre.

How to measure this area? That is up to the directors on whose country the art centre is built and operates. They may want to talk about access to country. They may want to talk about visiting particular sites to see the artwork of their ancestors, to spiritually or culturally inform their art practice, or to source art materials. They may want to talk about tourism, research, land management, roads and mining. Everyone's country and everyone's perspective is of value. Your job is to listen and take direction within the parameters of your role.

You are on Aboriginal country

You are on Aboriginal country and you should be mindful of this fact wherever you are on the continent. Every place has a name that long pre-dates any name in English or Latin and the state and territory boundaries imposed on it.

In remote communities, you may need a permit in order to live and work there because it is Aboriginal land. It is not public land: it is privately owned by its traditional owners. You may need to organise permits for visitors. You must be responsible for contractors, volunteers, friends and family when they are on community and surrounding country, ensuring they behave in ways that will result in mutual respect.

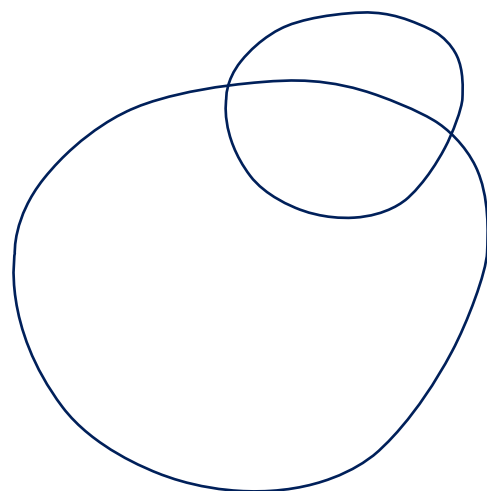
Don't assume it's okay to go wherever you choose – seek guidance from the art centre's directors and senior people about this as soon as possible and follow their advice. Don't wander about randomly snapping photos or filming. There will be places that you can and can't go, places to walk and not to walk, places to take photos and not to take photos. Be especially mindful of where sacred sites are in the community and around it. Country is powerful and has agency. If you do the wrong thing, you are endangering both yourself and the owners and custodians of that country or particular aspects of it.

Take the time to learn about the country of the community you are now living on: familiarise yourself with its habitat



Carlene West painting at Tjitjiti in the Great Victoria Desert.
Image: Spinifex Arts Project.

The operational areas of Culture and Country are your safety net. When work, remote life or community politics get you down, go back here – to the foundation – and reconnect.



and weather patterns and its recent history so that you are better positioned to understand the community's strengths, concerns and priorities. Be open to learning about the culture that is part of country if people want to share it with you but remember you have a big job to do and you need to get on and do that. (Luckily, bush trips are part of your job!)

Important organisations:

- Central Land Council
www.clc.org.au
- Northern Land Council
www.nlc.org.au
- Ngaanyatjarra Council
<https://www.ngaanyatjarra.org.au/>
- Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Council
<http://www.anangu.com.au/>
- WA Dept of Planning, Lands & Heritage
<https://www.daa.wa.gov.au/land/entry-permits/>



Martha McDonald painting at Papunya Tjupi, 2017.
Image: Rhett Hammerton, Desart.

3. ART

Without art, what would an art centre be? The art of Central Australia has been described as one of the most important art movements in the world.

'Making art is not just about money, it is for culture and country.'

This section focuses on arts development. For commercial aspects, such as pricing and exhibitions, see pp. 109–10 and 114–16 respectively.

Artists who work with art centres might make paintings, ceramics, carvings, weavings, sculptures, photographs, digital art, textile art, glass...often in addition to what they do in other genres of the arts – performing arts, literature and more.

The artists of an art centre might create just 200 paintings a year and make sure each one counts through profile exhibitions, commissions and prizes and awards that generate healthy income:

keeping the art centre sustainable. Large art centres might produce thousands of paintings, weavings, carvings, prints and ceramics and also sell licensed products. They need to purchase all the materials, tools and machinery to make the artwork and they need to find a market for all that work.

Each art centre is different. How can 'art' be measured? Maybe through ensuring and keeping track of:

- cultural authority
- authenticity
- sales
- exhibitions
- reviews
- awards
- painting the correct Tjukurpa
- quality of materials
- experimentation
- happiness of artists.



Teresa Baker and Kani Tunkin of the Kanpi Women's Collaborative at the Pierre Arnaud Foundation in Switzerland with their painting Minyma Tjutangku Kunpu Kanyini, 2017. Image: Benji Bradley, Tjungu Palya.

TIP: Test for technical ability, plus methods, tools and materials. Do artists need a technician to visit? Do you need to support an artist to think about different ways they might express their subject or review a colour palette?

Valuing art is different to pricing art – it is about criticism and it is a part of a history of art, and a history of dealing in art.

At least once a year, pull together all the work that has not sold for a long time. Sit down with the directors and ask: What does the unsold work have in common? Look at the size, the subject and whether the work is damaged or not. Is there a pattern? Great art sells itself, but the rest is hard work.

There are many resources on art to guide you. See the Knowledge Bank at the back of this book for resources about dealing in art. Take time to learn about and understand the art centre's sales history by reviewing the data in SAM, generating relevant reports and analysing the sales patterns.

'Focus on working with the artists to produce good quality paintings that will sell in the fine art market. Try not to get involved in local politics. Work with your executive to create a financially stable and sustainable business. Work with what they wish to achieve, such as saving for a second motorcar, or putting money aside for trips to exhibitions.'
– Bronwyn Taylor, former manager of Ninuku Arts (2006–2010)

Arts development

Not every Aboriginal artist depicts culture and country – some don't want to and some may not be culturally authorised to do so. Arts development is ongoing and never-ending. Support individual artists to develop their own distinctive styles and specialties and to explore different aspects of their artistic expression.

Some considerations in this area:

- What factors have influenced the best of each artist's work?
- Ask artists which workshops and projects they have enjoyed – and why.
- Are there specific technical skills that artists would like to learn or refine?
- Is there a concept or issue that artists want to explore creatively?
- Are there places on country that will inspire artists: sacred sites, ancestral artwork...? Plan some bush trips.
- Organise visits to galleries and cultural institutions for inspiration and to connect artists and art workers with the national and global art world; contact curators to arrange a personalised tour.
- Tools and materials plus inspiration and execution equals great art.



Ruth Benson of Elliott prepares fabric for eco-dyeing. Image: Yoannah Mynah, Barkly Regional Arts.

Materials and mediums

The choice and use of materials is an expression of the artistic idea. This technical area requires ongoing workshops and inspiration – painting, ceramics, weaving, textiles, printmaking, sculpture, photography and video are some key disciplines for artists. Yarrenyty Arltere artists sew and embroider, artists with Tjanpi Desert Weavers combine native grasses and other materials to make sculptures and installations; and ceramicists with Ernabella Arts are constantly exploring using different techniques and glazes.

Think about conservation and value: invest in quality materials and take the time for correct preparation and proper storage. Good quality canvas and linen, paints and mediums, stretching and the use of standard stretcher sizes are all part of good painting studio practice.

Be pragmatic about the art centre studio. Is there enough space to work with lots of different materials or is the studio better limited to one form of art making? Don't just think it would be great to introduce a new art practice. Are artists interested, does the art centre have the capacity to expand, and an established market to sell to? When you introduce new materials to the artists, make sure you can sustain support for experimentation and development.



TOP LEFT Mary Katajuku Pan from Amata (SA) gathering minarri grass, 2017.

Image: Rhett Hammerton, © Tjanpi Desert Weavers, NPY Women's Council.

TOP RIGHT Danny Lopes of Chapman & Bailey (Alice Springs), ready to help art centres with framing and art supplies. Image: Rhett Hammerton, Desart.



BOTTOM LEFT Ernabella Art Worker Scotty Ken. Image: Stephanie Simcox, Ernabella Arts.



BOTTOM RIGHT Papunya Tjupi art centre's paint room. Image: Rhett Hammerton, Desart.



CONNECTING THE ARTIST WITH THE AUDIENCE

THE ARTIST

ENVIRONMENT

- Eaten today?
- Family support
- Weather outside

BACKGROUND

- History
- Experience
- Home Country
- Heritage
- Education

MESSAGE

- What am I trying to say?
- Why am I trying to say it?
- Who am I communicating to?

MONEY \$\$\$

- Do I want to be paid?
- How much \$ do I want?

HOW?

- How will I paint?
- Techniques, methods, materials, skills, colours

THE AUDIENCE

FIRST IMPACT

- The power of art

LEARN MORE

- Catalogues
- Price list
- Discussion with gallerist

RESEARCH

- Who is the artist?
- What other work have they done?
- Where are they from?
- Where can I see more artwork?

MEDIA

- What have I already read / seen / observed?
- Do I want to understand?
- Am I afraid of it?
- Am I inspired by it?

FASHION

- Is this cool / trendy?
- Does this suit me / my home / my style?
- Who will see it and what will they think?

MONEY \$\$\$

- How much is it?
- Can I buy it?

Adapted from a diagram presented by Claire Eltringham for Ninuku Arts, Desert Art Centre Conference, 2012.



Nyurpaya Kaika Burton with Linda Rive opening Desert Mob 2015 at the Araluen Arts Centre. Image: Hannah Millerick, Desert.



The stars of short film Never Stop Riding, 2017, L to R: Payuway Mungkuri, Johnny Doolan, Peter Mungkuri, Vincent Namatjira, Michael Drover and Kunmanara Andy. Image: Jackson Lee, Iwantja Arts.

Artists' career development

This is one of the more complex aspects of art centre management. You need to support artists at different stages of their careers: emerging, mid and established. Help artists to identify and extend their strengths. Talk with artists about what is important to them and what they want to achieve. Discuss concepts, techniques, mediums. Ask what a successful career looks like to them. What (and who) might help them get there? Encourage artists to be bold, but don't impose your ideas on anyone, and make sure you are realistic about the art market, challenges and the art centre's resources – including your capacity to nurture talent and protect each artist's cultural and commercial interests.

Some artists working through art centres are already in another stratosphere: they are famous. This impacts the culture of the art

centre, which is, in effect, an artists' cooperative. If a successful artist's best opportunity to forge the career they want might come from exclusive representation with a reputable commercial gallery, talk to experienced colleagues first and seek expert advice (including legal advice). Then discuss the pros and cons with the artist.

Managing an artist's career and protecting their interests is a huge and important responsibility. Exhibitions, commissions, awards, interviews, books, magazine articles, product licensing, travel commitments and family pressures and obligations all require sensitive and smart navigation. The demands of being an art star can place an artist in real danger. Consider opportunities and risks carefully.

TIP: Ensure artists have a will, set them up for resale royalty, and investigate trust fund options to look after a successful artist into their old age.

Residencies, exchanges, workshops

Artists may want an arts facilitator to come to the art centre for access to specialised knowledge in areas such as ceramics, digital media, textiles. Artists may also want to travel to other art centres, close to home or perhaps in the Torres Strait Islands or Far North Queensland or the Kimberley.

Consider artistic expertise and cultural authority within the art centre and community before bringing in artists from other places. Perhaps speak with the community's school principal about an 'artist in residence' program.

Put into practice the Australia Council's Protocols for Working with Indigenous Artists: www.australiacouncil.gov.au.

Prioritise community-driven projects: organise brainstorming sessions with directors and artists. Understand the difference between engaging an arts facilitator for technical expertise and embarking on a residency or collaboration. They can be understood to be two very different things.

If the artists want to host an artist in residence, plan the residency inclusively and carefully. Artists from outside undertaking a residency have a lot to gain from the experience. For some it is an entirely new experience that will open a whole new world to them (creatively and commercially). Always ask: What is in this for our artists? What are the tangible benefits to the art centre, artists and art workers? Be clear about the parameters, everyone's expectations about the creative

process and outcomes, willingness to commit, and how Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property rights will be embedded and honoured in the residency or collaboration. Make sure everyone is offering something meaningful and that you have the capacity to properly support the art centre's artists and art workers throughout the project. Put everything in writing; see ICIP on p. 96 and Collaborative projects on p. 97 and make use of Arts Law's template contracts for any such projects.

Reflect on creative initiatives in the region (and elsewhere), and consider their processes, partners, resources, outcomes and benefit mix, and which party initiated the project. Here are some from among Desart's membership:

- *In Cahoots*: Fremantle Arts Centre + Martumili Artists with Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro; Papulankutja Artists with Louise Haselton; and Warakurna Artists with Tony Albert, and others (2017)
- *Ngurra*: Home in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands: SA Museum + Warakurna Artists, Papulankutja Artists, Tjarlirli etc. (2017)
- Sculptural jewellery workshop: Yarrenyty Arltere + Ilka White (2017)
- *What if this photograph is by Albert Namatjira?*: Ittja Ntjarra Many Hands Art Centre + Tom Nicholson + TARNANTHI / AGSA (2017)
- *Kerjasama*: Asialink Arts + Artback NT + Tony Albert + Timoteus Anggawan Kusno + Cemeti Institute for Art & Society + Ittja Ntjarra Many Hands Art Centre (2016)



- *Kuru Alala eyes open*: Tjanpi Desert Weavers + Maria Fernanda Cardoso + Alison Clouston, with Gold Coast City Art Gallery (2009)
- *Canning Stock Route Project*: FORM + Kayili Artists, Martumili, Papunya Tula Artists, Warlayirti Artists and more (2006).

Tony Albert collaborating with Warakurna Artists, Warakurna, 2017. Image: David Charles Collins, courtesy Warakurna Artists.

Expressing Tjukurpa/Altyerre

Recording and depicting Aboriginal motifs and creatively expressing Tjukurpa is Aboriginal business.

4. PEOPLE

Like a hit song by the Sunshine Reggae Band, behind every artwork and exhibition is a whole band of people – directors, artists, managers, art workers, volunteers, contractors... Human resources are integral: when the wrong people are in an art centre, the whole place can go down and close very quickly. In this section, we look closely at the different people working at the art centre.

The people area of an art centre's operations is primarily made up of artists, directors, the art centre manager and art workers. Your willingness and ability to build positive relationships within and beyond the art centre is crucial to its success and future. Focus on relationships within the art centre, especially at the outset.

Three main points to remember are:

- **Be self-aware**
- **Meet together every week**
- **Be open to learning: everyone works better with a *malpa* (mentor).**

Managing people well is often said to be the most difficult part of a managerial role. And the most rewarding if you get it right. So, aim to do that! The directors have entrusted you with a position of power. Use it to build an art centre culture that encourages trust, honesty and respectful relationships. If you're doing your job well, you'll be achieving the art centre's goals and achieving a well-performing workplace.

Sit down with the directors and staff and artists of the art centre, and listen

and learn from them. What is important to them about their art centre, their culture and community? What's been working really well? Is there anything that's not been working so well? It's usually okay to ask some questions in this context but if you encounter silence, don't push it. Always keep in mind what is going to be the best for the artists – and understand what that is from their perspective.

Make sure that the admin side of the art centre's people is in order and get yourself up to speed with Federal and State legislation that governs employment. (The Fair Work website has lots of excellent resources and templates.) Check funding contracts that cover salaries so that you understand and work to these aspects of the art centre's obligations, also.

The industrial award that covers all art centre staff is the Amusement, Events and Recreation Award 2010. An Individual Flexibility Agreement addresses variations. Contact Desart's Strong Business Program regarding the currency of your art centre's employment contracts, assistance with updating job descriptions and to discuss pay scales.

Check that all of the art workers have a current employment agreement and a copy of the National Employment Standards. This is a requirement of all IVAIS-funded positions. Sit down and work through the paperwork with each staff member to make sure you both share correct understandings of everything. Check art workers are filling

out a timesheet every day and regularly receiving a proper payslip. Work together to create individual work plans that will promote learning alongside achieving the daily tasks that need to be done in the art centre in order for it to meet its goals. Respect privacy and confidentiality, and encourage art workers to obtain support, training and advice via the Desart Art Worker Program.

How to measure this area of the art centre's operations? One important aspect is regular performance reviews for every staff member. Performance reviews should be informative and constructive and focus on solutions and areas for improvement. It is the manager's job to manage the work performance of art workers.

This should happen informally at least every two weeks, meeting to check and adjust individual work plans and expectations, and then a formal annual review. Performance reviews of the art centre manager (probationary and annual reviews) are best conducted by art centre directors assisted by Desart staff or an external facilitator. Talk to Desart staff if you want HR support, and use the excellent resources on the Fair Work and the Australian Institute for Indigenous Governance's websites.

TIP: It's *how* we work that matters, not how much.



Eunice Napanangka Jack and Art Centre Manager Chrischona Schmidt at Ikuntji Artists. Image: Rhett Hammerton, Desart.

Art centre people

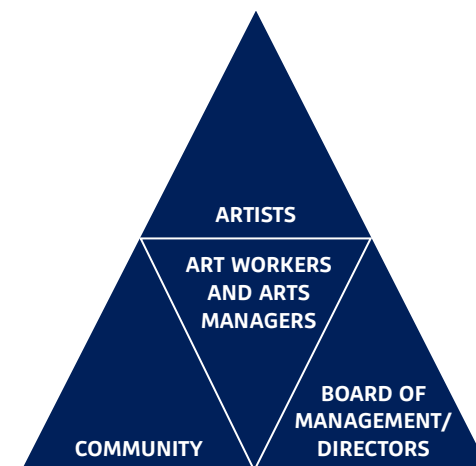
MICHELLE EVANS*

People are the most important resource of an art centre.

Great art centres pay close attention to the many different groups of people that make up the organisation: the board, art centre workers, artists, volunteers and community supporters. Art centre managers are responsible for paying attention to and facilitating the different ways these groups contribute to the art centre.

Aboriginal communities are the strong foundation from which art centres spring. Art centres are responsible to the community, through its board of management. Aboriginal communities are a deep resource: for local knowledge; cultural expertise; protocol management; and the social/family relationship networks. Art centre managers must develop independent relationships with the community within which they reside and work. Relationships with key community organisations, families and individuals will work to provide you with cultural identity and uphold the cultural integrity of the art centre.

Relationship building through open listening and reciprocity is important to fostering trust and respect. Indigenous knowledge is built relationally. So, sharing information and operating in a transparent manner consistently is



key to art centre managers developing a solid foundation. The work of the art centre is best understood as a two-way street. The art centre manager is charged with bringing management and artistic knowledge. The artists /art workers / board and community bring artistic, cultural and local knowledge. The relationship is not about exchange per se. It's about building knowledge together for the success of the art centre.

Learning the local social norms and cultural protocols related to work in the art centre is essential. Relationships with community members may require long-term effort. Trust can be earned through consistent, fair work. Indigenous expertise can be found in diverse organisations in the community, not just in culturally associated organisations. Understanding the

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relationships between organisations in the community and where authority exists within and between these organisations is important.

Positional authority (being the manager) does not equate with being the cultural authority in the community. How you negotiate authority with the board of management and with art centre workers, volunteers and artists is the most important leadership work art centre managers have to do. Establishing very early on the boundaries of your obligations, the parameters of your expertise and decision making will help establish relational communication structures for your work. The cultural authority vested in the board and the artists operates at a very different level to any organisational or positional authority. Developing a process of negotiated decision making with the board from the outset will be critical to your success. Through these negotiated relationships, art centre managers build a strong foundation for the work their role has to do.

One important issue new art centre managers need to be aware of is the high turnover of expert personnel in Aboriginal communities. Many communities are fatigued by having to start over again with each new art centre manager. Community members may also be upset at losing friends or frustrated by the lack of capacity development in the community in order to manage their own art centre. All these factors, coupled with the residue from colonisation and more contemporary governmental

management controls, mean that non-Indigenous art centre managers may face some resistance.

These very complex issues can mean that non-Indigenous art centre managers feel like outsiders when living in Aboriginal communities. It is critical that these issues are thought through and spoken about with trusted colleagues. There are a lot of politics in the Indigenous arts industry that stem from competition for, and control over, scarce resources. The business of Indigenous art works off the back of Indigenous culture. This can cause serious tension for artists and community members. There are many unscrupulous people in the industry seeking to make a profit without care for the personal or cultural impact this may have.

The art centre manager has a complex role – running a not-for-profit business, supporting the careers of artists and art workers, moving between management demands and cultural requirements. Mediating relationships and weighing up competing demands is at the heart of the role. Art centre managers become experts at switching between the jargon of arts management and business, and the talk of the community art centre.

It is a demanding and completely life-changing role.

What makes a good art centre manager?

The members of Yarrenyty Arltere Art Centre at Yarrenyty-Arltere (Larapinta) town camp in Alice Springs put together this list of top ten things that they think make a good art centre manager.

1. Showing kindness to artists and their families
2. Encouraging and helping artists with their work
3. Making new artists feel welcome and comfortable about coming back, so the art program stays strong
4. Help artists manage their money so it is spent on good things for them and their families
5. Make sure there is a shopping afternoon for artists with no transport
6. Helping artists talk to other whitefellas about fixing washing machines, getting power tickets, getting firewood, etc.
7. Helping artists to feel healthy and de-stressed by taking them on swimming programs and bush trips, and by providing healthy lunches and snacks in the art room
8. Holding meetings about what's happening in the art program, to understand where the art is going and share feelings about getting stronger
9. Keeping all photos of the artwork, so artists can remember what they have done after it has been sold
10. Listening to artists' stories so people can be told about Larapinta and

what is done here; and stories about our families.

Establishing strong professional networks with other art centre managers is also important. Yes, you're all competing for a share of the same or aligned markets and funding, but you also share common concerns and aspirations: you're the desert mob! The people at your art centre are family for the people at the neighbouring art centre. Everyone wants you to do your job well and enjoy this period of your life.

Managers and coordinators at other art centres were all once new to the job, just like you. We asked them what they think is most important when starting out. We couldn't squish in all of their excellent advice! Here are 25 tips, randomly selected. You'll come across others elsewhere in this book.

1. Don't let your personal politics get in the way of good art centre and artist management. This is really important. Put the artists first. Ask yourself: What would I want if I was the artist in this situation?
2. Cultural safety and awareness. It's like Neo in the film *The Matrix*: you go through a sort of rebirth, and it takes about two years. You must assume you know nothing and to be very open to having your brain rewired, because that's the only way you will do a good job. If you stay in the mindset you have now, you will leave within months.
3. Listen to and be guided by the artists; it's their art centre/ their families/ their community/ their future.

4. Don't become a rescuer – this is not empowering. As adults, everyone is responsible for the decisions they make.
5. Make sure you keep your sense of humour.
6. It's vital to have clear boundaries. Be prepared to make mistakes but then learn for the next time. Be kind but don't be a sucker! Well, be a sucker sometimes but not all the time...
7. Relationships – build them both internally and externally. Key to success. Especially with the artists. For them, it's all about family.
8. Art centre work is hard work – every day, in your face, but martyrdom just shortens careers and actually undermines everything you should be trying to do. Hopefully that is about investing in stability for the people you are working with. If you burn out and abandon your position, then you are not helping anyone at all.
9. Have a self-care plan. Use it!
10. Observe first, make changes later... what you think when you first arrive often changes dramatically over the course of time.
11. Time, time, time, good things take time.
12. If the workload seems impossible...it is! But everyone is in the same boat, even successful managers. Don't panic. Bring it back to the artwork. Ask yourself... 'Is strong artwork being made?' It's a good way to simplify things.
13. Being good at the job is about embracing the chaos....not being driven mad by it. Don't try and beat it, surrender and work out how to operate within it.
14. Reach out to other managers, nothing you are going through is new. You are not alone!
15. Develop a trauma-informed approach to your work. [See p. 84.]
16. Forget about being accepted into Aboriginal culture, and get on with the job. This is your best way of forming strong relationships with people.
17. Feeling overwhelmed, confronted, exhausted, homesick...can all be common when you first join this line of work. Don't feel like you have to pretend you're not; talk to your directors, colleagues and support staff – they'll get you through.
18. Wear a hat!
19. You can only do so much in one day especially if you want to stay. Learn to say MAYBE or LET ME THINK ABOUT IT...most people are willing to wait or they will find an alternative to the urgent matter.
20. Make sure you eat well and stay fit... it's important to keep healthy while living in the community.
21. Take an interest in and really try to learn and speak the language (including hand signals). It really helps build relationships – even if everyone is always laughing at how dumb you sound.
22. If Desart has training, courses, mentoring, symposiums, anything you and the artists and directors can participate in to develop, DO IT!!! Even though a few days away from



*Sandra Brown and Anna McCauley sorting paintings at Mwerre Anthurru Artists (Bindi).
Image: Rhett Hammerton, Desart.*

- the studio sounds terrifying, it's always beneficial and likely you'll learn how to be a better manager and you'll actually catch up on some admin work.
23. Learn the family relationships. Be impartial: as outsiders it is best to treat all people the same and not form family alliances or show favouritism.
 24. Don't even bother trying to say one thing if you are thinking another ... you won't get away with it, EVER!! Aboriginal people are the most intuitive, perceptive people I have ever met!
 25. ENJOY your time, it is a privilege!

Professional conduct

The environment is unique, so as the manager, remember your role as a mediator and moderator. You are paid to manage the art centre. You are not in the community or at the art centre to do your own artwork (it is not a paid artist-in-residence position).

All employees must conduct themselves in accordance with the following common-sense principles. Employees must:

- act honestly and fairly in all work-related transactions and dealings with others
- treat other employees, contractors, members, directors, competitors, and all other people they deal with at work, with courtesy and respect
- act within the best interests of the art centre and its members
- comply with all laws, regulations and codes of practice applicable to the operations of the art centre, including:
 - Office of the Register of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC)
 - Indigenous Art Code
 - Australian National Employment Standards
 - Work Health and Safety Act and related regulations
 - equal employment opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation.

Your contract should cover conduct relating to confidentiality, purchasing artwork, intellectual property, use of workplace equipment (including vehicles) and commercial dealings. Maintain a professional approach to your role at the art centre at all times.

Meetings

'Have regular meetings and talk about all the art centre's business so everybody knows what's going on and can help with planning and decisions.'

– *Desart director*

Being on time to a meeting is an important and subjective cultural value. One group of people might value a meeting that started on time with a good agenda and accurate minutes. Another group might value a meeting because the right people were there and good discussion happened.

Silence is okay. Some people feel the need to fill a void with speaking. However, silence is okay too – maybe people are waiting for the most senior person to make a statement, so that they can follow.

Always provide interpreters. Let an agenda or discussion point circulate in the community for a few days or weeks before the meeting. Don't present emergencies and expect an emergency response. A common complaint from new staff is, 'They are not responding, this is an emergency!' An Aboriginal artist in Darwin once replied to this by saying, 'We've been in a state of emergency since you whitefellas got here!'

Please talk honestly about the use of interpreters with directors to open up dialogue. Even if people have very good English language skills, speaking in your own language aids expression. Many communities have trained interpreters you can engage for your art centre meetings – contact the

Aboriginal Interpreter Services. Ask your chairperson to conduct meetings in their own language, with an English interpretation for you.

Working with the art centre team

'Build and value your team. You can't do it alone!! Work to and develop their strengths. Be firm but fair and let people know your expectations: people usually want to meet them.'

– *Manager, Ernabella Arts*

When you arrive in the community and start your job as the art centre manager, set aside what you think you know, sit down with the artists, directors and art workers, and prepare to learn from them. Their art centre has been their workplace much longer than it has been yours, and you are a guest in their community, on their country.

See the Art section on pp. 57–66 for

our guide to working with artists – and always remember that the art centre needs to function well for them. Without happy artists making great art, the art centre is in big trouble. That's why there is a whole section devoted to artists and their work.

For info on working with directors, see (primarily) the Governance information on pp. 130–3, which covers the important leadership responsibilities of directors and your role in relation to your directors and the art centre's corporate governance.

The rest of this section focuses on art workers and other people contracted to the art centre, including you!

Joanne Wheeler and Art Worker Nadine Moseley at Tangentyere Artists. Image: Rhett Hammerton, Desart.





Sabrina Kelly and Graham Beasley of Arlpwe Art and Culture Centre at work at their Desert Mob MarketPlace stall, 2017. Image: James Henry, Desart.

About art workers

JANE YOUNG*

There are a lot of art workers and people who want to work in art centres. I started working with art centres more than 30 years ago. People have been doing all different kinds of art and craft jobs. The art jobs at Santa Teresa – in the 1950s – included knitting, sewing, embroidery, making dolls, small wire toys, toy windmills, and drawing with crayons coloured pencils. The first teacher of art and craft, at the mission at Santa Teresa, was Sister Edith who arrived in 1974. She taught pottery, copper work, macramé, screen-printing and leather-work. A few years later, Cait Wait came to teach a nine-week fabric-printing course and stayed for five years. At Keringke Arts Centre, Cait Wait trained art workers and then those art workers trained each other. Jobs were shared so that the same person was not always doing the same thing and getting bored.

Why should art centres have Aboriginal art workers? Some art centres don't. Is it okay only to have white people working in art centres? We need to work together. Art workers keep the art centre strong, they keep culture strong. It is important for Aboriginal people to learn how to do all kinds of jobs because the manager won't stay forever. If Aboriginal people know what is going on, they can tell the new manager. The new manager might stay for three years and then go, and we will still be there. Art workers need to tell the new manager how it has been done before, so they know. We need to know all the jobs because most people don't want to live in the community forever. Sometimes it's hard for art workers to stay and do their job because managers come and go, you might not have a supervisor. The new manager might

* Desart Chairperson and artist with Tangentyere Artists



Art Worker Tamisha Williams stretching canvas in the Martumili studio, Newman. Image: Ruth Leigh, Martumili Artists.



Art Worker Terazita Turner-Young installing a show at Tangentyere Artists. Image: Rhett Hammerton, Desart.

come and they might be unfriendly, but you need to help them to mix in, show them how to be calm, show them and tell them not to just go ahead and do whatever they want. New managers need to slow down and let the art workers tell them about their roles.

An art worker needs to stand next to and get on well with the manager; they can learn from each other. An art worker is also there to help the artists.

Some art workers are senior men, like GB at Arlpwe Art & Culture Centre; some are young people, like Terazita at Tangentyere Artists. Some art workers are doing their first job. Some have had lots of different jobs. If people are happy and working together in the art centre, it's a place where there is no pressure. Art workers like their jobs because of the culture and stories – art worker jobs can be great fun!

Old-time jobs were really hard. We used to clean the convent, do the washing

and cooking for the nuns, the ironing, clean the brothers' rooms and the church, and look after the vegetable garden.

My mum and dad worked doing fencing and station work. Aboriginal people had a lot of jobs and they didn't get money for that. They were stockmen and cooks.

Fifty years ago, in Santa Teresa, if a married couple wanted a house they went out and got rocks to build their own stone house. People worked collecting the rubbish and then burnt it. We had Aboriginal electricians and they would turn the generator off at night. There was a bakery and two Aboriginal bakers. The nuns were teachers, but it was a bilingual school and the older girls helped teach in Arrernte. There were lots of chickens and pigs, and people worked as farmhands. There were Aboriginal health workers and they worked at the Alice Springs Hospital, too. They were really hard jobs. Now it is a modern world and we have art worker jobs.

Working with art workers

‘It’s important for new art centre managers to understand the importance of an art centre being open for our artists and ourselves as art workers.’ – Terazita Turner-Young, *Art Worker, Tangentyere Artists*

The essential role of the art worker is to:

- provide studio support to the artists
- provide administration support to the manager
- act as a bridge between artists and the community, non-Aboriginal art centre staff and the wider art sector.

Like art centre managers, Aboriginal art workers’ industry qualifications and experience will vary widely. Remember that for some Aboriginal art workers English may be a second or third language (which is a positive for the art centre) and literacy levels will vary.

*From the Indigenous Governance Toolkit: <http://toolkit.aigi.com.au/toolkit/7-3-managing-staff>.
© Australian Indigenous Governance Institute.*

The responsibilities and rights of staff members

An organisation is only as good as its people. To have effective staff members with high morale, an organisation must make sure that staff members know where they fit, are respected and feel secure.

Know where they fit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know what their roles and responsibilities are.• Know the organisation’s structure and how it all fits together.• Know the strategic and business plans.• Understand the cultural context and history of the organisation’s members.• Know that they contribute to the goals of the organisation.
Can perform	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know how to carry out their roles and responsibilities.• Work according to the policies and rules.• Understand the legal framework within which the organisation operates.• Actively contribute to decision making, planning, reporting and staff meetings.• Have their work performance monitored and fairly reviewed.
Are valued	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respect each other and work together as a team.• Have access to regular training and professional development.• Are not micro-managed by the management or governing body.• Uphold the organisation’s core values and vision.• Feel trusted and respected by management and the governing body.
Feel secure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know who to go to if they need help or advice.• Feel valued and trusted by the management and governing body work. Have a safe and encouraging environment.• Understand the complaints and appeals policies and procedures.

Art workers report directly to you, the art centre manager. Your job is to support them to feel valued and secure in their roles, supervise them day to day and map out with them training and professional development that they can meaningfully apply in their work.

As Aboriginal people, art workers have kinship relationships and obligations to members of their community. This can result in art workers:

- feeling obligated to share their resources with family members
- being unable to assist certain community members due to avoidance relationships and factionalism
- being under immense pressure as a result of community expectations, which in certain situations may be impossible to deliver on
- being the target for blame if something goes wrong with the money story at the art centre
- needing to be away from the art centre to participate in funerals or ceremonies.

You need to ensure you have mutual understandings of their rights and responsibilities (see the list below). You must keep abreast of relevant employment legislation and relevant industry awards. Just like your own employment, that means up-to-date job descriptions and employment contracts, timesheets, leave entitlements, pay slips, and regular check-ins and performance reviews. You also need to ensure you are fulfilling the obligations of the IVAIS funding contracts for art workers’ salaries and conditions of employment.

Cultivate a healthy workplace and a happy and productive team. Art workers are super important! Desart has lots of expertise, and our Art Worker and Strong Business program staff will help you work together positively towards change where it’s needed. (See Desart’s Art Worker Program on pp. 17–8.)

TIP: Talk to Desart Art Worker program staff about employment, training and professional development opportunities for art workers.

Working with contractors

There are a lot of art centre tasks for an art centre manager. With all the administration and travel, or if specialist expertise is required, some work might need to be outsourced. Some art centre managers later become consultants!

Your art centre probably engages a bookkeeper or accountant and an auditor. Check that contracts are in place so you know exactly what work the art centre is paying them to do. If there are any gaps or you’re unsure, seek advice from Desart or Arts Law to amend the contract. If there is no contract, set about negotiating one. It’s important this is in writing. Desart maintains a service register of experienced interim art centre managers, business consultants, bookkeepers, auditors, photographers, artists, builders, architects etc. Contact Desart’s Strong Business Program for more info.

No matter how busy and desperate you are, take your time with all of the following.

- Put major work such as business plans or website redevelopments out to tender or do a select tender accessing the Desart Service Register.
- Prior to appointing anyone, always check references and seek out examples of prior work, no matter what word-of-mouth tells you.
- Negotiate and agree on the scope of work, milestones (quality control), fees and terms of payment and include these in the contract.
- Produce a Letter of Offer and contract (contract templates can be purchased from Arts Law).
- Be clear on intellectual property, confidentiality and representation.

Four potential issues:

1. The principal-agent (art centre-consultant) problem. Don't outsource your agenda-setting and values.
2. Fees and accountability. A job isn't cheap if it has to be re-done or can't be used.
3. Ownership. Art centre directors are the bosses, and priorities can change.
4. Risk exposure. Always provide a clear brief and put terms in writing.

Good contractors are worth paying for but check that their qualifications and quality of recent work stack up. Ask to see recent examples. Do not simply employ your father, brother, sister or mother to do the business plan or other work at the art centre. That's called nepotism and is a potential conflict of interest. Declare all and any

relationships that you have with people tendering for art centre work.

When selecting a consultant ask:

- Are they on the Desart Service Register?
- Can your directors/artists/art workers work with them?
- Can you work with them?
- Are they in touch with the industry?
- Do they bring a fresh perspective?
- What is their experience working with organisations of the same size/type?
- Are there any conflicts of interest?

If you're unsure what a reasonable fee is, talk to Desart's Strong Business Program staff or your colleagues, and if you're a member of the National Association for Visual Arts (NAVA), check its Code of Practice for scales of fees and wages relative to qualifications, which includes national industry rates for independent curators, workshops, arts administrators, travel expenses and per diems.

Working with volunteers

Taking on volunteers can be a rewarding experience for everyone. A steady stream of volunteers from all around the world have been helping Warlukurlangu Artists' since 2002. Other art centres, including Ikuntji Artists, take on volunteers from time to time, depending on needs. Papulankutja Artists had a whole family come and help with a building project once.

Volunteer involvement requires that you and the art centre have the capacity to host volunteers well. You'll need

to negotiate out-of-pocket expenses, provide reasonably comfortable accommodation, make sure they're covered by the art centre's insurance policies, and effectively manage the volunteers.

For an understanding of what can be involved, check out Warlukurlangu's volunteer info pack on its website, and Volunteering Australia's national standards: see <https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org>.

Some art centres also host interns. Interns have their own structured and fixed requirements that you must support them to meet. They can be fabulous too – but they're not volunteers.

Health and safety

As an art centre manager, you need to ensure that the art centre doesn't create health and safety problems for anyone, including visitors. It is important to induct and support staff, volunteers and contractors and ensure a culturally and physically safe work environment for everyone. The art centre also has a duty of care towards you, and you should discuss any concerns with the chairperson and directors as appropriate. Talk to Desart's Strong Business Program staff if you have unresolved concerns. Remember that all Desart member art centre employees can also access free independent counselling over the phone, to help find ways to better manage professional or personal matters.

Don't think health and safety simply means having a full first aid kit at the

art centre, and a functional jack and two spare tyres on the troopy (though that's a good start!). Under Australian legislation there is an obligation to:

- provide safe work premises
- assess risks and implement appropriate measures for controlling them
- ensure safe use and handling of goods and substances
- provide and maintain safe machinery and materials
- assess workplace layout and provide safe systems of work
- provide a suitable working environment and facilities
- have insurance and workers' compensation insurance for your employees.

*Tangentyere Artists' painting studio.
Image: Rhett Hammerton, Desart.*



Workers also have an obligation: to comply with relevant instructions and not willfully endanger themselves or others.

The Safe Work Australia website has some useful fact sheets: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/>. Links to the legislation relevant to different states and territories can be found at the Australian Government's Business website: <https://www.business.gov.au>.

If you've never done a 4WD course, don't assume you are a competent 4WDer, even if you've owned one. There are things you've never thought of and don't know. Trust us on this. Budget for and do:

- 4WD training
- first aid training.

The art centre's approach to food impacts everyone's health in the workplace. If you're providing food and drink, make sure you provide **healthy food options**. And look after yourself: keep hydrated and don't live on sweet biscuits. Nobody wants to work with a hangry (hungry and cranky) manager.

Two environmental dangers to watch out for:

Mulga (*Acacia aneura*) is a wood commonly used for making implements and favoured as firewood. But it is poisonous if it pierces your skin: the wound can quickly become infected and you'll need antibiotics. We know of an artist who had to be hospitalised because of a mulga injury. Don't let that be you or any of the art centre team! Get some sturdy gloves and make sure



Safe work practices in the art studio are important, as demonstrated by this art worker at Tapatjatjaka. Image: Tapatjatjaka Art and Craft.

good tweezers are in the first aid kit in the troopy. In an emergency, if nothing else is to hand but you happen to have a raw onion, use it to make a poultice to draw the splinter out.

Mozzies can spread serious diseases such as Ross River virus (RRV), Barmah Forest virus (BFV) and even encephalitis when they bite. Okay, so those diseases are rare – but there's no cure. Mosquitoes do make appearances in the desert...so cover up when they're about and stock up on your repellent of choice.

(This list could be a lot longer but we're not including the really obvious things to watch out for. Like sunburn. Heat exhaustion. Cheeky dogs. Snakes. Wild camels. And bush fires. We'll stop there. Don't walk about in the dark without a torch, though – put a torch app on your phone and use it.)

Dealing with conflict and disputes

If it doesn't affect the art centre, keep out of it, no matter how juicy or tempting. If it's whitefellas against whitefellas, how boring! Try rehearsing: 'That sounds very challenging.' Or: 'Oh well, we don't have those issues at the art centre.'

If a conflict or dispute is affecting the art centre, you probably need to do something. Ongoing conflict and disputes in any organisation can be a cause of high turnover of staff, and be critical to success or failure. Bear in mind though that Aboriginal and Western approaches to dealing with conflicts and disputes intersect but are generally not the same.

What do the directors, artists and art workers regard fair process to be? Make sure this informs the art centre's code of conduct and grievance policy.

'When artists have a fight/argument, be polite and talk with everyone in the room about keeping respect inside the art centre.'

– *Art Worker, Hermannsburg Potters*

If conflict erupts in the art centre, draw on the art centre's code of conduct and diplomatically remind everyone of it. Don't do anything to inflame the situation. If there is physical risk, intervene only if it is safe for you to do so, and preferably with the help of members with the cultural legitimacy to do so. Remember you – and the directors – have a duty of care.

If there are issues-based disputes, acknowledge the value of different

views and help people to define the issues and identify why they matter. Focusing on personalities and emotions is not helpful. Step back. Explore the issue from all perspectives. It's not always essential that everyone agrees but it is important that different views are understood and sensitively acknowledged.

If there are personality-based conflicts, recognise that these may not be resolvable. Long and complex histories of trauma and grievances may be involved. It can be wise to invite an acceptable third party to offer guidance or positively influence the situation. If the person continues to cause significant disruption to the art centre's activities, exposing anyone to risk of harm or making anyone feel unsafe, you might have to – with the backing of your directors – take decisive action.

Try to develop approaches that respect and reinvigorate cultural values and also work successfully to mitigate risks and difficulties. And if the conflict or dispute involves staff (including yourself), attempts to resolve it should be documented and will need to follow procedures set out in the Amusements, Events and Recreation Award and meet other legal obligations.

TIP: Read the disputes and complaints topic of the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute Toolkit. You'll then be much better equipped to deal with conflict and disputes when they arise: <http://toolkit.aigi.com.au/toolkit/8-o-dealing-with-disputes-and-complaints>.

The trauma story

BLYTHE McAULEY*

You're an art centre manager, not a social worker, but understanding trauma will help you understand the worries that some of the people with whom you are working and living among have.

Trauma is defined as:

- **A single, ongoing or cumulative experience which is a response to a perceived threat, usually to survival.**

That word 'perceived' is an important one as it helps us understand why one person may find an experience very distressing and another won't. It is all about how the experience is perceived.

- **It overwhelms our capacity to cope.**

This is an important point too as it helps us distinguish trauma from stress. With trauma, none of our resources are working and we are overwhelmed by the experience. We are left with only our survival strategies of fight, flight or freeze.

- **It feels/is outside of our control.**

What is happening feels outside of our control and our responses also feel outside our control.

- **It evokes a psychological and physiological set of responses based on fear or avoidance.**

For example, the way we respond to the world is altered. We may

become angry and explosive, or sad and withdrawn.

In understanding the experience of trauma for Aboriginal people it is also important to understand transgenerational trauma. This is trauma that is passed down from one generation to the next, not only by stories and through parenting but also epigenetically. That is, alterations are made physiologically at a genetic level. Things such as addiction, depression and anxiety are being linked to epigenetic inheritance.

Trauma can affect people in lots of different ways. Manifestations include:

- increased reactivity, quick to anger or to flee
- shutting down
- sleep disturbance, nightmares
- poor memory, poor concentration
- confusion
- avoidance of places or activities
- using strategies such as increased alcohol and drug use to avoid thoughts and feelings
- difficulty forming and maintaining relationships
- disconnection from family, country and culture
- hypervigilance, always scanning the environment for threat
- fear
- depression
- anxiety, panic.

So, what does all this mean for you? The more we understand trauma, the more we can respond with empathy and understanding. It also helps us to put things into perspective and not take things personally!

Staff retention

You've been employed by the art centre's directors because they believe you've got the right skills, attitudes and qualities for the job. Map out a work plan for your first year, set it into a calendar and regularly check your progress. Talk with Desart's Strong Business Program staff and your directors – book in your probationary performance review and your annual review. Stay connected to your external networks and get in touch with art centre colleagues in your region. Plan for professional development and holidays. Be self-aware, have boundaries and stay connected. Enjoy your work!

Contact Desart's Art Worker and Strong Business program staff to access professional development opportunities for yourself and other staff, and directors. Building on skills and knowledge to help do a job better always makes it more rewarding. Support art workers and directors to be productive, do training and professional development (and to use what they've learned in their roles), and help them to enjoy their work, too. The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute website has great information about how to manage staff well. Read it now and act on it!

Sometimes we stuff up in our work. If a staff member is underperforming, it's your responsibility to support them to get on track, or to terminate their contract. Make sure you handle this fairly and within the letter of the law. The Fair Work Ombudsman's website has excellent information about due process, and good checklists and templates you can use. Be aware that if directors are unhappy with your work performance, they might seek assistance from Desart staff or other independent people to assist them to manage your performance, too. Don't let it get to that. Listen to what artists, art workers and directors are telling you and be responsive.

* Blythe McAuley is a psychologist and the manager of Therapeutic Services for the Australian Childhood Foundation. The Australian Childhood Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting children and families devastated by abuse, family violence and neglect.



Ellē Misios (Chapman & Bailey) and Albie Tjakamarra Jack (Ikuntji Artists) engaged in a Desart studio skills professional development workshop. Image: Desart.



Glenn Iseger-Pilkington (SA Museum), Pamela Hogan (Papulankutja Artists) and Kristabell Porter (Warakurna Artists) discuss the Ngurra project at the Desert Mob Symposium 2017. Image: James Henry, Desart.

Professional development

SALLY CLIFFORD*

Lifelong learning for art centre managers is important, whether you've been in the job three months or three years. Here are some pragmatic approaches that can help you navigate the challenges and ensure that your professional and personal skill set is growing in the job.

Stay connected: It's so easy, especially for very remote art centre managers, to become disconnected and isolated from the professional networks that larger towns and cities offer. Staying connected doesn't have to cost anything, and may be as small as committing to a monthly phone catch-up with a previous boss, work colleague or old university lecturer. For those who are more experienced, it could involve getting onto an arts advisory board linked to an arts organisation or funding body in a capital city, where you are able to Skype/ teleconference into meetings etc. Staying connected can also be as simple as having an annual membership to something like ArtsHub (artshub.com.au), which offers a lot more than just job postings.

Formal mentoring/coaching: Seeking out a regular session with a mentor who can push and encourage you can ensure you keep on growing in the job. They can also act as a scout for professional development (PD) opportunities. A workplace coach is similar but more work/task focussed and is a great way

to get targeted support for specific workplace challenges. This format can be easier to get into a budget and be realised, as it can be done in situ, with no travel or locum manager required. Desart offers a coaching program for new art centre members.

Structured courses and PD programs:

Accessing Desart's PD programs and opportunities is key here: no course cost, just travel and time. For other PD programs, which cost something, you will need to make a decision. If you want/need the art centre to pay for it, you need to put it in the budget and explain to and convince the board how it will make the art centre stronger. The alternative is if you have your own funds, you commit to paying your own PD each year because you can and you believe it's that important.

There are also scholarships and grants for PD. It's worth getting on mailing lists and including these in your set of PD goals. Some great ones are the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation, Churchill Fellowship and the Australia Council Leadership Program.

Prioritise and commit: I often see managers not doing PD, not because they or the art centre can't afford it but because they can't prioritise it in their schedule. If you're struggling to prioritise your PD, run this scenario: *Your time comes to leave the job and you think about what's next. What's the professional skill set and networks you have to leverage off?*

* Sally Clifford is General Manager of Matrix on Board and a former art centre manager.

Recruitment

Art centres are primary places of employment for local Aboriginal people. If one of your art workers resigns, properly thank them for the good work they've done, and try to understand why they are leaving.

If you need to recruit art workers, ask artists and staff for recommendations, and think about anyone in the community you've talent-spotted. Promote the (Aboriginal-identified) job on social media and put up a flyer at the community store and on the community noticeboard.

Make sure the position description and contracts are right first, and that you understand the salary and conditions you can offer, including leave entitlements and superannuation. Be sure you're able to clearly communicate the tasks required and your expectations. In the community, talk to CDP workers: is there someone who might love to have a real job with the art centre? Talk with schools and families, too – consider senior students you could head-hunt for art centre work. And if you have the capacity to offer work experience to students, talk to the principal. This can be a great way to open a pathway for someone suitable and dedicated to join the art centre team. You might be employing a future art centre manager!

Talk to Desart's Art Worker Program staff if you need help, and make sure that you have a proper employment contract prepared and follow legislative requirements for employing staff.

Time to move on?

Before it's time to move on, work with the directors and Desart's Strong Business Program to develop a succession plan. Make sure the art centre always has a healthy recruitment budget. As systems change, update the art centre's procedures manual, and review it annually.

And when it's time for you to move on, leave properly. Find your way home again...

Know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, know when to walk away, know when to run.
(Lyrics from *The Gambler* by songwriters Lorenz Hart & Richard Rogers.)

This might seem premature if you're newly appointed, but you know it's time to move on when:

- you've lost your sense of humour
- you snap at people
- tasks that used to take five minutes take an hour
- you're out of touch with close friends
- you're always tired.

It doesn't matter if it's been one year, two years or three, you know when it's over. Don't wait around for one more project, one more exhibition, one more mortgage payment – when it's time to go, it's time to go. So:

1. Notify your directors.
2. Check the recruitment budget with your bookkeeper.
3. Talk to Desart about its recruitment service, discuss options with directors (ORIC also offers a recruitment

service). Enter into an agreement for a recruitment service.

4. From the time you resign and a new manager starts, it could be 10–12 weeks: four weeks' advertising, phone interviews, referee and police checks, face-to-face interviews, selection, contracts, start date and handover.
5. You have worked hard; don't leave badly.

It takes a long time to recruit and it's expensive, so start working with your directors straight away. If directors want Desart to assist with recruitment for a new manager, contact the Strong Business Program. The art centre pays for recruitment travel and advertising costs, and Desart helps review the job description etc. and manages the

advertising, shortlisting and interview processes. Desart will also assist you to prepare well for handover to your successor. Get the Desart handover checklist – it covers important aspects of the art centre's operations:

- procedures
- finances
- governance
- assets
- staff and HR
- administration
- working with artists and selling art
- people networks.

Now you have all your people working together and the art is fabulous. It is time to make sure that the business is following the law and proper process.

Ellé Misios, Art Centre Coordinator, at work at Ittja Ntjarra Many Hands Art Centre.
Image: Rhett Hammerton, Desart.



5. BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION

Most art centres are not-for-profits – which in current business strategy terms means they are purpose-driven businesses.

Management of the business side of an art centre includes its governance and commercial operations, which require a lot of administrative work. Some say an art centre manager's job is 60–80% administration. This includes critical tasks relating to the proper governance of the art centre, and everything from writing funding applications to chasing payments and ensuring artists and staff are paid. Administration mainly happens in the office and on a computer.

It's all too easy to get distracted from the proper business of the art centre, especially the important longer term strategic work. This is especially so if the art centre is regarded as the most functional entity in the community – it can become the go-to place for everyone to get all sorts of non-art business done. This is scope creep. Remember that you are being paid to do the duties listed in your job description. Every time you stray, you're outside of core business. Use your time and energy wisely and set clear boundaries. Don't get distracted and miss a funding report deadline or ORIC's deadlines for the annual audit or date of the art centre's AGM.

That said, always listen to the artists. That's how fantastic initiatives that ultimately make for a resilient art centre happen. Think, for example, of the art auctions that have funded Western

Desert Dialysis units and services in Kintore and Ernabella, so families can now stay together for longer on their own country.

Management essentials

1. **This guidebook.**
2. **Active, well-informed directors.**
3. **Current art centre business plan – use it and review goals, strategies and KPIs.**
4. **Most recent art centre annual report, with audited accounts.**
5. **The art centre's most recent balance sheet – go through it with the accountant.**
6. **All current funding agreements – list amounts, activities, KPIs and reporting dates.**
7. **The art centre's policy and procedures manual – use it and update it.**
8. **Stories Art Money (SAM) Database: www.sam.org.au**
9. **The art centre's Rule Book (its constitution) – find it at www.oric.gov.au and make sure you understand it.**
10. **Free confidential counselling or coaching and support at any time (a Desert membership benefit).**
11. **The Desert team: phone (08) 8953 4736.**

'It is important that Anangu run their own business and know it's their right. They have to be strong in running their own business in their own art centres.'
– Frank Young, Chairperson, Tjala Arts⁵

manual up-to-date. It will help you and the art workers to go about your work confidently. And if an interim manager needs to step in, or when you decide to move one, you will be handing over an excellent toolbox.

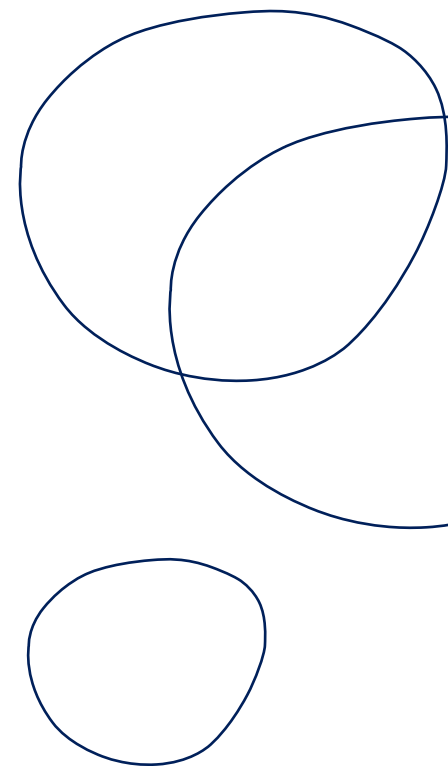
Policies and procedures

'There must be clear rules: the use of the phone, vehicle, art materials, opening hours, artist payments, what happens when there is sorry business. This is done through talking, listening, taking time and letting everyone know.'
– Desert director

The strictest policies seen at Desert are those set by the directors through putting all their concerns on the table and making it policy.

Good policies and clear procedures will increase the capacity to effectively and efficiently operate a successful art centre, ensuring sustainability, vitality and creativity. Get your hands on the art centre's policy and procedures manual. If the art centre is part of a larger organisation, the art centre will be subject to those policies and procedures, as well as ones specific to the art centre's operational environment and activities.

Desart has a range of high-quality, secure, relevant and accessible information relating to policies and procedures. Some can be accessed through the SAM database www.sam.org.au. If you can't find what you're looking for, call Desart program staff for assistance. Keep the art centre's



⁵ Cited in Nganampa Kampatjangka Unngu, Tjala Arts (ed.), Wakefield Press, 2015, p. 74

Social media and photography Grants management

If the art centre doesn't yet have a social media and photography/film policy, work with the directors and Desart to develop one. The directors will guide you on the level of photography, filming and online presence with which they and the community are comfortable. They might want to specify sacred places that should not be approached or photographed. Taking and using photos of children will require the permission of their parents or guardians – and some funders will include a clause about this in the art centre's contract. Reference the Australia Council's relevant media protocols. Be aware that filming and photography in communities and surrounding regions may also require special permits depending on things such as the intended usage. It is good practice to include a clause relating to the art centre's social media policy and filming and photography protocols in letters of offer or contracts so that everyone's clear about what they can shoot and post.

Research

Desart endorses research projects only with the approval of its directors. We recommend you develop a research policy with your directors. The policy might require researchers to provide a plain English proposal that you can present to the directors. It might define what the directors or community's research priorities are and what their understandings of community benefits are. Get on the front foot.

When you begin your new job at the art centre, you will hear colleagues rattling off acronyms. In the beginning, it sounds like another language: 'You need to talk to the dee cee ay about the eye vase, eye ell ay, and the ee sub. Go see oz ko in Sydney or ay bee ay at pee em see in Canberra.'

Got it?! Don't worry, it won't take long before you are talking the same language!

Establish and build professional and productive relationships with the art centre's funders. Call and introduce yourself to their project officers in your first weeks. Funders are key stakeholders: you probably wouldn't have your job without them!

Review any project funding and its timelines and always attempt to negotiate a variation if things are not going to plan. Remember funders want you to succeed. Don't be afraid to speak with them. And be sure to publicly acknowledge them at every suitable opportunity – minimal obligations around this are usually specified in funding agreements.

Keep a simple spreadsheet or table of all your funding agreements, reporting dates, amounts and key performance indicators. Keep a folder of photos, feedback, comments, relevant data, and media to include in your reports.

Government and other agencies understand that art centres are busy places. They don't expect things to be written to a PhD standard but they do want you to be clear and concise. They

expect honesty and community voices and presence. Interview directors, artists and art workers and transcribe how they describe meeting your Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Where you need to provide data, generate reports using the up-to-date data in your SAM Database. Use photos in reports, or short movie clips if that's acceptable to funders.

Keep abreast of fundraising opportunities: relying on government funding is not a sustainable financial strategy. If Desart's regular funding e-blasts are not landing in your inbox, sign up for them, and also subscribe to relevant government and philanthropic agencies' alerts. If there is critical infrastructure for which the art centre needs funding, make sure Desart staff know so that they can direct you to any potential funding programs or sources or – especially if multiple art centres have similar needs – build a case to lobby for funds on your behalf. (See Financial Strategies on pp. 122–4 for information on fundraising.)

Many funders offer constructive feedback to grant program ideas and draft applications, and some hold workshops and webinars on how to secure funds – how to build and present your business case, how to write funding applications etc. The National Association for Visual Arts (NAVA) has useful information online about grant writing – and dealing with rejection. Make the most of all the expertise on offer. Funding and investment (government, philanthropic, corporate) is always competitive and limited, and learning how-tos from

funding administrators is a great way to strengthen your relationships and improve your skill in this essential management area, along with the art centre's chance of success. If you need support letters, give your supporters sufficient information, context and time to discuss and prepare an effective letter. (Desart requires five business days.)

Stories, Art and Money (SAM) Database

The art centre's main administrative tool outside of its document filing system is very likely the online SAM Database. (It's used by over 80 art centres around Australia.) So it's important that you have or set up a user name and password in SAM, learn how to use SAM well, understand how it integrates with financial software, and budget for the annual support fee: <http://sam.org.au>.

As part of your induction to the job, you might have done some SAM training. If not, contact Desart's SAM Program Manager to discuss training opportunities so you can get up to speed quickly. Screen sharing for initial training is possible, which means you can schedule it into a work day at the art centre. And you (and art workers) can learn at your own pace with the online SAM video tutorials and information in the SAM Knowledge Base: <http://feedback.sam.org.au>. If you encounter any problems, technical support is available during business hours. (Email: support@sam.org.au)

SAM is really versatile, so make the most of it. You'll use it to catalogue



1 What was the last catalogued artwork?

Go to menu [Catalogue] > [Add Artwork] and check the last catalogued number. You can also go to menu [Search] > [Artworks] to view the latest catalogued artworks in the list.



2 What artwork is available in your art centre?

Go to menu [Search]>[Artwork] and check that the status is Available. All artworks that are available on this list should be the same as what is available as stock in your art centre.



3 What consignments are overdue?

Go to menu [Reports] > search for 'consignments' and select the report 'Consignments – all overdue by Customer'. You can also search for current consignments: 'Consignments – all current by Customer'.



4 What invoices are overdue?

Go to menu [Sales] > [Search & Pay Sales] – click on Overdue to check any invoices that require immediate payment by customers. Invoices move to Artists accounts only after they have been paid in SAM.



5 Are artist payments up-to-date and accurate?

Cross-reference the last artist payments in SAM with the physical bank payments.



6 When was the last export?

Go to [Accounts] > [Exports]. Highlight the latest export date and view related reports on the right-hand side of the screen. Did this export go to MYOB or QuickBooks? (Check with your book-keeper.)



7 Is any artist's biography information missing?

Go to menu [Reports] > and search for the report 'Artists List – check information for Bio'. Any key missing information areas for artists' biographies will list.



8 Are invoices for purchase orders outstanding?

To check whether purchase orders are awaiting an invoice: Go to menu [Reports] > 'Artists Outstanding Purchase Orders'. Follow-up – these are liabilities.



9 Staff access to your SAM

Review the staff list to check all current staff still require SAM access, and amend as necessary. Go to the menu [Admin] > [Staff list]. Click on the user name and add 'Date Terminated'. Once a date has been set, the user won't be able to log in to SAM from that date.



10 Keep up to date

The SAM database is only as good as the data you enter, so we recommend going through this checklist each month.

and label artworks, document their provenance, do sales and consignment transactions, issue certificates of authenticity and artist biographies, control the art centre's stock, promote artworks to customers, facilitate online purchases if the art centre has an online store, and aspects of financial management of the art centre, including payments to artists. With SAM, you can also generate reports to help you track and analyse the art centre's sales performance, individual artist's sales, production outputs and much more.

SAM caters for multiple users in any location with internet connection. This means different staff can use SAM simultaneously and you can enable various security levels for each person accessing the database. You can also use the database offsite at market stalls, galleries and exhibitions for ease of sales transactions and digital creation of certificates of authenticity.

SAM needs a good internet connection. If you are concerned about your internet speed, access Desart IT technical support to find out how you might improve the speed. (See p. 156.)

Remember SAM is only as good as the data that you put into the system. So ensure you are cross-checking and updating your information regularly. We recommend a monthly check using the SAM 10-Point Checklist.

This is your guide, Sam, in the SAM training videos at www.feedback.sam.org.au



If you're unsure how to complete the spot-check tasks, use the SAM Knowledge Base or the SAM training videos:
 ► feedback.sam.org.au/knowledgebase ► feedback.sam.org.au/knowledgebase/articles/1190335

Top 10 legal issues for art centres

ROBYN AYRES AND CLARA EDWARDS*
ARTS LAW CENTRE OF AUSTRALIA

1. Governance and the Indigenous Art Code

A well-run arts centre needs a strong board or committee that has a good working relationship with the centre manager.

Part of the good governance of art centres is to make sure you are compliant with the Indigenous Art Code, which sets simple ethical standards of best practice.

You can read more about the Indigenous Art Code on Arts Law's website, or the Code's: <https://indigenousartcode.org/>

2. Employment issues

Happy employees and good processes are essential to a positive, safe workplace. The best way to make sure you have a healthy workplace is to:

- understand your workplace health and safety obligations
- understand your legal obligations regarding unfair dismissal and discrimination
- be upfront about all of the rights and obligations of employees
- use employment contracts to be clear about all of the above.

Seek HR assistance from Desart or access Arts Law's legal advice services.

3. Copyright and moral rights

Copyright is the 'property of the mind'. It stays with the artist even once an artwork has been sold, unless the artist chooses to sell or 'lend' the copyright to someone (see no. 6: Licensing).

Copyright is a way to generate money during the lifetime of an artist and beyond, so it should not be given away lightly! Art centres can teach artists how important this asset is and make sure all copyright permissions are in writing.

Moral rights protect the integrity of the artist and their artwork. For example, if anyone changes the way an artwork looks without the permission of the artist, they might be able to claim damages or ask for an apology.

You do not have to register to get copyright or moral rights – it is automatic as soon as you create your artwork!

4. Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property

Understanding and respecting ICIP is an essential part of the way every good art centre does business.

ICIP is a way of recognising the traditional stories, techniques and knowledge that has been passed down through culture. It is not currently recognised by Australian or international law but you can still make it a part of your work by bringing it into contracts and following cultural protocols in all dealings with artists and artworks.

Check out Arts Law's information sheet on ICIP for more background knowledge.

5. Contracts

Don't be scared of contracts: they are a useful tool for being clear about your intentions and plans. Arts Law can review agreements and has lots of template agreements available on our website, including an art centre and artist agreement.

Before you go ahead with an arrangement make sure you know what you are signing – things might get messy otherwise. Arts Law has also started a 'talking contracts' project that is designed to make it easy for artists and art centres to understand what they are signing up to.

6. Licensing

What is licensing? It's like 'lending' your copyright to someone. It means that anyone who wants to use an artist's work has to pay a fee (usually) and agree to the artist's requests for how to use the work. For example, licensing can be used if an artist wants to give permission for someone to reprint their artwork on a fabric or on merchandise.

Again, it's important to get any licensing agreements in writing.

7. Consignment agreements and the Resale Royalty Scheme

Consignment agreements are used when an art centre wants to sell an artist's work. For galleries you show with regularly, use an umbrella consignment agreement. The art centre has certain obligations – such as making sure the artwork is not damaged – and

must comply with these until the end of the agreement.

Art centres that use consignment agreements should also understand how the Artists' Resale Royalty Scheme works and sign-up artists to a collecting society such as Viscopy.

8. Debt Collection and the Personal Property Securities Act

Make sure that galleries you deal with are reputable. To protect yourself and artists, and to ensure payment when works are sold, you should enter into a written agreement – Arts Law has some great resources on its website. A gallery should return unsold works as soon as possible after any exhibition. If a gallery does not pay, send a letter of demand and get any unsold works returned.

The *Personal Properties Securities Act (PPSA)* can protect artists. Make sure you register in order to retain ownership of work if the gallery goes out of business (there's more info about the PPSA on pp. 101–2 and Arts Law's website).

9. Collaborative projects

Collaborations happen often in the arts and between artists working on short- or long-term projects. Use contracts to manage the various relationships and ownership of copyright and artworks. You can also use contracts to define who does what, and to ensure the artists and art centre are being fairly paid for their contribution.

Arts Law has a collaborations toolkit on its website that you should refer to when planning and entering into collaborations.

* Robyn Ayres is CEO and Clara Edwards is a solicitor, Arts Law Centre of Australia



If you have a legal question about copyright,
contracts or any other arts law issue, talk to
Artists in the Black.

(02) 9356 2566 | 1800 221 457 (toll-free)
www.artslaw.com.au | aitb@artslaw.com.au



10. Wills

The cultural and legal issues that arise when an artist passes away can be very sensitive. It is always simpler if a will is in place because it sets out the wishes of the artist in relation to their copyright, artworks and estate. Strict laws known as 'intestacy' apply in each State and Territory and these will be applied if there is no will.

Arts Law has a detailed toolkit on each State and Territory for dealing with wills. Arts Law also provides a free will drafting service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

The most important thing to remember: get legal advice! The Arts Law Centre of Australia website has free information sheets on legal issues, template agreements and legal advice services. Visit www.artslaw.com.au and www.aitb.com.au; phone (02) 9356 2566 / 1800 221 457.

Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property + collaborative projects

DELWYN EVERARD*

I am in awe of Desart's art centre managers: they are small business operators, curators, community workers, financial advisors, drivers, logistics experts, tour guides, cooks, linguists – and so much more – all rolled into one role that is a 24/7 commitment.

They are also champions of Aboriginal culture. The artists expect it and their elders demand it. The art centre manager stands at the bulwark of over 65 000 years of Indigenous culture, charged both to protect it and simultaneously to secure a strong financial return in a sophisticated domestic and international commercial art market. To say this is not easy is an understatement. The manager represents the artists and the art centre in negotiations with galleries, collectors, institutions, funders, media, corporates and, in a creative sector constantly evolving and exploring new and diverse multi-platform and cross sector creative collaborations, increasingly also other artists and arts organisations. Most are keen to engage with the world's oldest living culture, and believe themselves respectful and culturally adept, but see the creative and commercial opportunities through the prism of their own creative and commercial needs. They can be dismissive of, or struggle to engage with, issues that do not neatly fit into the known spectrum of standard commercial terms.

I often get asked by managers: 'How do we secure a commercial outcome that addresses the issues of cultural protection in the way our artists expect?'. I would start with the Australia Council's Protocols for Working with Indigenous Artists. It should be mentioned as a baseline in every MOU or contract. Remember though that it is a set of principles rather than a

* Delwyn Everard is founder and principal of Everard Advisory and former director of Legal Services at Arts Law.

handbook. So, how can managers enshrine those principles of respect, control, communication and integrity into a contract or working arrangement?

You can choose your business and creative partners carefully. That's always good advice but not always enough. This is particularly so in the creative collaborative space where despite mutual artistic respect, each creator is often primarily focused on their own creative journey and practice and may not appreciate the different perspective of their co-creators or may assume that the creative concerns are the same. For example, a number of art centres have found that non-Indigenous artists routinely document their creative process on social media without appreciating that it may not be appropriate to share their extraordinary first experience of a remote community with the world. This can also be true of other visitors including volunteers and academics. The art centre's artists can be unwilling to tell the visitor that they are uncomfortable or where the boundaries might be – but won't hesitate to hold the manager accountable later. In this situation, some artists fail to engage or engage in a way that subtly undermines and affects the integrity of the collaborative process. Even worse is the situation when the artists only fully understand at the conclusion of a project that it will be used in a way they regard as culturally inappropriate – and it is too late to make changes. They hold their manager responsible for that failure of process.

An example of a successful collaboration enriched by transparency

and communication around these issues is 'In Cahoots', which combined the energies of six different remote and regional art centres, their artists and staff, seven independent artists working in different disciplines, and a public exhibiting institution. Logistically and culturally challenging, it engaged artists from every State and Territory of Australia over a two-year process resulting in an exhibition that opened at the Fremantle Art Centre in November 2017.

Curator Erin Coates and I started working together at an early stage by mapping the anticipated values and outcomes of each of the stakeholders – not just those who might need to sign contractual documents. This was an approach effectively used by then manager of Martumili Gabrielle Sullivan in connection with the We Don't Need a Map project. We focused not just on the participating artists but the entire art centre community which would host the visitors, the elders, the young people seeking learning and mentoring opportunities and what the community sought from a wider engagement with the Australian public. We discussed with the art centre managers the mentoring opportunities that might emerge for art centre staff and arts workers and how a process that facilitated trips to country benefited each of the art centre's artists and staff, the visiting artists and the curatorial team differently. This framework helped both of us to develop a broader process and infrastructure for the whole project – curatorially for Erin and, for me, in developing a contractual platform that started from the fundamental premise

that the creative collaboration would be enriched if set within a cultural prism of respect, control, communication and integrity.

Six different collaborations, six separate residencies and six separate contracts all directed to a single exhibition sounds complicated. Erin believes that critical to its success was that, 'from the onset, In Cahoots was led by the Aboriginal art centres, with their artists selecting and inviting an independent artist into their community to make a new body of work with them'.

So why involve a lawyer at all – why not just have really open and transparent conversations about culture between all the players at the beginning? In my view, the formality of enshrining these fundamentals in the written contract provided a gravitas and weight that forced both the exhibiting institution and the independent artists to take this issue seriously and deeply consider it before the collaboration commenced. It ensured that everyone was provided with the same information and invited to ask questions at the beginning. As one manager commented: 'It created a clear process around some of the ways as to 'how' culture must be respected. The contract contained concrete examples for the visiting artists and provided me with documented milestones and benchmarks I could use. The contract gave me the confidence to raise these issues without embarrassment.'

The contractual framework (developed through extensive consultation with Erin and 'road-tested' with Mangkaja Arts) built into the collaborative process

ground rules around taking photos, using social media, community input, respecting the role of the art centre manager and staff, acknowledging that every creative engagement involved an expression of culture, and that every sharing of story or technique or country is a privilege that comes with responsibility. These ground rules were given equal importance with the standard contractual terms around copyright ownership, money, expenses, timing and insurance.

The documents created for 'In Cahoots' have been adapted by the Arts Law Centre into templates that can be used for other projects and are available on the Arts Law website: <https://www.artslaw.com.au/>.

Personal Property Securities Act

If you consign artworks to a gallery, there is a risk of losing all of the artworks if the gallery goes out of business. Manage this risk by registering ownership of consigned artworks to legally protect artists' security interests against other creditors.

The instrument for this is the Personal Property Securities Register (PPSR), created under the *Personal Property Securities Act 2009 (Cth)*. It has been in force since 2012. The Arts Law website has useful information customised for Aboriginal artists and art centres.

To begin, it's good to create an account so you can track the art centre's registrations. You need to create a registration for each gallery or dealer

('grantor') to which you consign art work (you don't register individual consignments). Describe the art broadly (for example, 'Indigenous art works') and register for a relatively short period (Arts Law recommends seven years). It costs less than \$10 per registration.

For further information, visit the PPSR website and the 'How to register' page at <http://www.ppsr.gov.au/ForBusiness/Howtoregister/Pages/default.aspx>. Or call 1300 007 777 or email: enquiries@pps.gov.au.

Risks and scams

An all too common high risk for art centres is **unsustainable debtors**. Don't be lazy with your gallery dealings. Ensure the trading terms are in writing (use Arts Law's templates for exhibition contracts and for art work consignment). Follow-up on consigned artworks (use SAM's consignment functions). Don't leave artworks to miss their market and become a liability: if the gallerist hasn't sold them within the specified timeframe, take action: either negotiate a sale to the gallery for floor stock or ensure the work is returned so that you can re-allocate it and achieve a sale for the artist.

As in any commercial sector, not all dealers are equal. **Don't keep dealing with galleries that don't pay, and don't enter into any new commercial arrangements without investigating a gallery's credentials and reputation.** Check with the Indigenous Art Code: is the dealer a member and who else do they represent? Talk to your industry colleagues, too.

This is in a different league: but art centres are an easy target for scammers due to the relatively high turnover in staff. Salespeople sometimes call with such authority and assure you that this is the way it has always occurred, the way that the last manager did it, etc. It isn't, so **don't fall for the scams!** Two classics are:

- **printer cartridges (overpriced)**
- **business directory listings (of no value and not government endorsed).**

Pressure on artists to sell direct

In the NT, most government employees are governed by clauses in their contracts that instruct them to support Aboriginal enterprise and buy from art centres. To promote the role of the art centre in the community:

- build a mutually beneficial relationship with key staff at the school, clinic etc.
- host art centre open days/nights
- organise artists' talks
- consider offering a locals' discount as part of the art centre's pricing strategy
- plan a stocktake sale
- have a Christmas sale.

Don't rely on rules and the big stick to make people buy at the art centre instead of doing a private deal. Get their support in other ways. For example, if you have a visiting linguist, perhaps with language speakers they could give a talk at the art centre on sign language – and host a community event.



Art Worker Marisa Maher and Coordinator Ellé Misios at Itjja Ntjarra Many Hands Art Centre.
Image: Rhett Hammerton, Desart.

IT hardware and software

As a Desart member, you have access to our IT Service and Support program, which offers capped technical support. If you have technical issues or want to be sure the art centre's internet setup is the best it can be, help is available via phone or email during business hours.

If the art centre needs to upgrade its IT gear, we recommend you check out the Connecting Up Discount program for discounted and donated computer equipment, smartphones and accessories (new, but also refurbished, including Apple) and software licences (including MYOB and Adobe Charity). Connecting Up deals are available only to eligible not-for-profits; most art centres qualify. See <https://www.connectingup.org/>. (This program used to be called DonorTec, and your art centre might already be registered.)

Don't waste art centre money. Cheap computers, printers and cameras don't deal with heat and dust. Do your

homework, and look at more than the initial cost. Many communities have partnerships and relationships with private schools and academies. Consider approaching them for quality IT donations. We know of at least one art centre that, through the social skills of its directors, was donated new Mac computers and iPads, all set up with software, desks and chairs.

TIP: Keep the art centre's asset register up to date and talk to your bookkeeper about depreciation.

Email etiquette

Ask yourself, 'Would a phone call be quicker and clearer?' The 2000-word email – it's okay to write it, just don't send it! Emails should be short, concise and to the point – one or two paragraphs; otherwise, consider a document on letterhead as



Manager Cecilia Alfonso and customer at Warlukurlangu Artists' gallery. Image: Desart.

an attachment. Write every email as though it will be on Facebook or read out at the Desart AGM. Remember, it is unprofessional to forward emails intended just for you. And note that emails sent at 3 am or 8 am on Sunday morning don't send the message that you are committed to your job: they send the message that you are not coping.

International travel

If you are lucky enough to have the opportunity to travel overseas on art centre business, here is some advice so you can be dazzling with jetlag!

- It will be hard work. Artists may be homesick and worry for country and family and miss their favourite foods.
- Line up opportunities – talk to Desart: we have networks of galleries, journalists, academics and friends overseas.

- Talk to Desart for useful international trade and industry contacts and act as an intermediary for the artists.
- Make sure that the local consulate general or embassy know you are coming.
- Double-check all medication requirements with the clinic and double-check everyone has their medication when they get in the troopy.
- Make sure artists are comfortable and happy.
- When travelling overseas you are representing not just the art centre and community, but the Aboriginal art industry as a whole. Do it with integrity – international travel is a bonus of the job.

6. COMMERCIAL (MARKETING AND SALES)

Australian art dealer Michael Reid believes that a good artist is market-minded (not market-oriented).⁶ It's an important distinction. What do you think?

If marketing and sales isn't already a large part of your world, it's about to be. You are charged with championing the work of the community's artists. If you can't sell their artwork, they don't get paid, and the art centre will go under. To be successful at marketing and selling, you need to be fair and ethical and smart and savvy. You need to be knowledgeable about the art market and you need to be a good negotiator. Don't rush in and sign up with the gallery you used to work at or do a licensing deal that confers no ongoing benefit to the artist. There are so many factors at play and the best thing you can do at the outset is allow yourself time to learn about and build your knowledge and your relationships with the artists and their existing supporters, dealers and buyers.

Marketing is primarily about connecting receptive individuals with the artwork. If a receptive individual is also cashed-up, *kerching!*, you might make a sale. This commercial realm connects closely with aspects of business management. We don't want to get hung up on where the boundaries lie; but consider these questions:

- In its own dealings, is the art centre meeting its obligations under the Indigenous Art Code?
- What does being creatively and commercially successful look like to the artists – and how can you support them in this?
- Are the goals for activity generated income in the business plan achievable and the strategies still optimal?

Indigenous Art Code

GABRIELLE SULLIVAN

The purpose of the Indigenous Art Code is to establish standards for dealings between dealers and artists to ensure:

- fair and ethical trade in artwork
- transparency in the process of promotion and sale of artwork
- that disputes arising under the Code are dealt with efficiently and fairly.

For detailed information on the Code visit <https://indigenousartcode.org/>. You will find the constitution of the Indigenous Art Code and the Code itself.

How is the Code useful to your art centre and to you as a manager?

Ask the Code questions about members

If you have any questions that relate to galleries, dealers or other businesses with whom your art centre is working,

⁶ <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/visual-arts/michael-reid-on-the-commercial-realities-of-art-collection/news-story/9dcb37ee5465c65da375dda66699568f> Creative Tension podcast, The Australian, 6 March 2017

or thinking of working, you can contact the Code for advice. We can tell you if the dealers are members of the Code and for how long they have been members, and discuss any concerns you might have. For example, you might have an outstanding consignment that the gallery is refusing to return or difficulty with overdue invoices not being paid.

In 2016 the Code revised the code member application process. We now ask dealer members to provide comprehensive information about their business, demonstrating that they are adhering to the Code.

Interest in Code membership has increased as a result of the Fake Art Harms Culture Campaign. There are now numerous dealer members who do not sell original artwork but are licensing product and merchandise. Being a member of the Code lets consumers and other businesses like museum and gallery shops and tourist information centres know you are a signatory to the Code and that your artwork and product is authentic Aboriginal-made and licensed product.

Using the Code logo

If your art centre is a Code member, you can use the Code logo on your website, packaging and labelling, and SAM automatically gives you the option to print a Code-compliant certificate.

Note: Some businesses using the Code logo may not be members: they might have been members of the Code previously. It is difficult to monitor this. To confirm a business is a Code member, check the Code website or call or email.

Complaints

If you have concerns about a dealer member of the Code, call or email the Code. Most issues can be dealt with quickly; others might take more negotiation.

Some issues will require the Code to refer you to another organisation such as Arts Law or the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC). The Code works with both of these organisations and can put you in touch.

There are some issues that do not have any clear solution. Unfortunately, much of the poor practice in the selling of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is immoral and unethical but not illegal and there is not always a satisfactory resolution of issues raised with the Code.

The Code needs art centres

The Code is only as strong as its members. It is important that the art centre voice is strong within the Code membership. Being a member means you can vote at annual general meetings on important matters including things like changing the constitution to make the Code work better.

Art centres are dealers, too. Art centres act as agents for their member artists and it is important that art centres – like private dealers and galleries – adhere to the Code.


The Code website

The website lists all Code members. Members appear on the map and in the list view. Clicking on a member will take you to the member's profile, directing you to the member's website, social media platforms and other contact details.

You can create your own profile by uploading images. You can also create profiles for individual artists.

There is a function that allows you to make connections with other Code members. The idea is that you create a profile for your art centre and your member artists, and the dealers with whom you work.

Contact the Code CEO,
Gabrielle Sullivan: 0438 637 862 or
gabrielle@indigenousartcode.org
<https://indigenousartcode.org/>



**ART DEALER/BUSINESS
(INDIGENOUS
OWNED/OPERATED)
IKUNTJI ARTISTS**

Ikuntji Artists is a member-based, not for profit, Aboriginal art centre. It is situated in the community of Haasts Bluff (Ikuntji), and has a board of seven Indigenous directors all of whom live and work locally. Haasts Bluff has a population of around 160 people. Ikuntji Artists is registered charity with both DGR and PBI status, which means you will receive tax back on all donations made to us.

LOCATION

ASSOCIATED ART DEALERS, GALLERIES + ART CENTRES

Click on a name to view their profile

- Aboriginal Contemporary
- Adam Knight
- AGB Events Pty Ltd
- Art Mob Pty Ltd
- Artitja Fine Art
- Bluethumb Pty Ltd
- Japingka Gallery
- Kerry Bryon
- Koskela Pty Ltd
- Mulapa Aboriginal Art
- Outstation Gallery - Aboriginal Art from Art Centres
- Talapi
- Vivien Anderson Gallery
- Yaamaganu Gallery

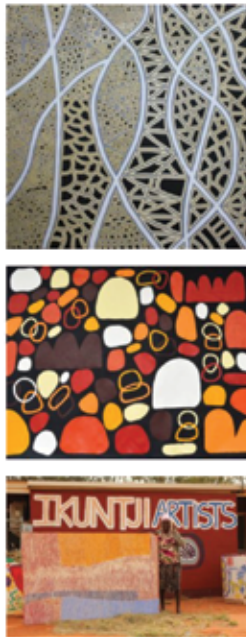
CONTACT

<https://www.ikuntji.com.au>

fineart@ikuntji.com.au

[+61 8 8956 8783](tel:+61889568783)

FEATURED ARTWORK



The art market

There is insufficient space here to cover the complexity of the contemporary art market so we're just touching on the basics. As the manager, you'll influence the positioning of each artist within the market. It's important to consider the spectrum of market sectors and your different distribution points.

Your market sectors might include:

- community members, including teachers and health workers
- tourists and travellers after affordable, transportable works, small or larger
- keen collectors and dealers purchasing mid to high-end works perhaps every year or two
- serious collectors and dealers buying work at the top of the market (the so-called 'taste makers')
- commercial galleries operating across the market spectrum
- curators of institutions building public collections and exhibition programs.

Be informed about the art market and stay in touch with the staff of the art centre's principal galleries – knowing about, understanding, and working effectively in the market is a key aspect of the art centre manager role. Keep an eye on the secondary market: auction sales influence perceptions of value – those of serious collectors especially.

The 'market' along with the 'state' (or government) are the two main external influences on art centres. Commercial and trading rules govern the art market: the art market is not an adjusting market – once you set a price,



*Dallas Gold, director of RAFT Artspace.
Image: Rhett Hammerton, Desart.*

generally the only way is up. Take care not to saturate the market: this can exert downward pressure on prices.

See Exhibitions on pp. 114–6 and the Knowledge Bank section.

TIP:

- **Subscribe to 'ARTNews':**
<http://www.artnews.com/>
- **Watch auction prices.**
- **Talk to your top galleries all the time.**

Pricing

Pricing is not difficult, but so many art centres have difficulties with it. If an art centre overprices artwork, it won't sell. Artists understandably become frustrated by a lack of sales, and the sustainability of the art centre will be at risk if works are not selling. The monetary worth of artwork is only what someone will pay for it.

If you want to sell an artwork, price it to sell. In the past, some art centres, under the pressure of hype and popularity, have let their prices soar and literally priced themselves out of the market. Art prices are not like property prices – they are not variable. You can't sell a painting for \$12,000 in February and then a similar one for \$4,000 later in the year.

Do your homework: look at what prices an artist's work has sold for in the past. Where was the market sitting at that time? What can it bear now? What does the artist think their work is worth? Why? How much do you think it is worth and why? Use your experience, knowledge, instinct and professional connections. Think about the career prospects of each artist, their buyers and collectors, and be mindful of managing the art centre's stock levels, too. Always talk privately to the artist about the pricing of their artwork. Don't raise prices just because something is selling well. Some market sectors will be very price sensitive.

The Desert Mob Exhibition is a perfect opportunity to look at and compare your pricing with that of other art centres. It can be a good activity to do

with art workers and interested artists. Get online and compare other artists' CVs and price points to those of your art centre. Review price lists from other shows such as the Telstra Awards, and from galleries where a show has sold out, too. Compare these with your own pricing, and don't forget to talk to other art centres in your region about price points.

Models and methods

Establish what pricing model and method the art centre uses (this should be in the art centre's policy and procedures manual). The pricing model might be cost-based, demand-based or competition-based.

Some art centres, with the support of their directors and artists, use a method of set-sized artworks combined with a pricing matrix that ranks artists from high to low according to agreed definitions. Or a matrix that works across a range of mediums and categorises artworks from 'small + affordable' up through 'tourist + transportable' to 'emerging + collectable' and 'famous + collectable'. These approaches can propel artists to strive to move up a level and thus be able to increase their income. Apply commonsense to any method: if a work is terrible or exquisite, adjust the pricing accordingly.

Another common method is a simple formula combined with appraisal and good judgement. You start with either the retail price or the artist payment.

Let's say an emerging artist you're keen to promote at a scheduled exhibition finishes a really stunning painting.

You've done your homework and decide it would sell at \$9500.

Retail price minus the gallery's 40% commission as stipulated in the exhibition contract*:

$\$9500 - 40\% (\$3800) = \$5700$

Minus the art centre's 40% commission** (for overheads including paint, canvas, electricity, fuel, teabags etc.):

$\$5700 - 40\% (2280) = \3420

Payment to the artist = \$3420.

Note that, as in the above formula, generally no GST is applied to the selling price. There are, however, two important exceptions.

1. In the rare case of an artist being registered for GST. This is because the artist is the seller; the art centre and the gallery are acting as the agent only, charging a commission for facilitating the sale.
2. If the works (usually relatively small items such as weavings, jewellery, bookmarks etc.) have been purchased by the art centre upfront.

** Make sure the exhibition contract is clear on whether or not the gallery's commission is inclusive of GST. If the commission is 40% including GST (in which case the gallery is actually charging a commission of only 36.36%), then your calculation should be 40%. If the commission is 40% plus GST, then you will need to deduct 44%. And remember a small gallery with a relatively low turnover might not be registered for GST.*

*** Some art centres, with the documented approval of directors, charge a 50% commission, usually as a short-term strategy to help get the art centre into a stronger financial position.*

Marketing and publicity

Look at the art centre's plans and budget. Is there a marketing plan and a marketing budget? Most art centres have very limited marketing budgets and little data about who their market is. Learn about your social media audience, and learn (using SAM) what you can about your primary sales market. Then make every dollar and minute count by targeting an increase in sales or greater exhibition opportunities or value-adding to your brand. If art centres in your region are working cooperatively on marketing initiatives (for example, APY Art Centre Collective, Western Desert Mob Collective), make the most of this.

Marketing undertaken in haste can have a negative impact – bad t-shirts, an awful logo, an expensive pixelated advertisement, a website that is not user-friendly. These are all negative marketing outcomes that may damage the art centre's brand.

A key concept for limited marketing budgets is the 'opportunity cost' of strategies: finances, and also staff and artists' time.

Promotional channels that you will need to be across include:

- Social media – this is probably the best way to broadcast what you are marketing. If you're going to do one thing, use Instagram. And if you're going to do two things, also invest in getting some great photos that include artists. See the social media tips on pp. 112–13.
- Websites – keep it simple: don't



outlay all your profit before you have made it. Some successful art centres don't have a website. Maybe all you need is a landing page to direct people to your social media. If you have an online store, block in time to keep it fresh and regularly check that all the important links are functional.

- Exhibition openings, art fairs and markets – do a full budget and a full cost-benefit analysis before committing.
- Desert Mob – the Desert Mob Symposium is a well-attended, subsidised platform for artists to tell their stories and connect with their audience. Use it!
- Advertising – check the reach and readership (print and digital) to make sure you will get value for money. Will you be talking to your existing market or potentially reaching a new one? Have you factored in the design

Winner of the 2017 Hadley's Art Prize, Peter Mungkuri, Ngura Wiru (Good Country); Iwantja Arts. Image: Jessica King.

cost? Always ask for a discount and a bigger and better ad.

- Publicity – getting a great exhibition review or a great story told via national media that goes viral can be the best promotion of all. Be proactive. Build your media relationships: host arts writers and reviewers. Learn how to write a brilliant media release and how to develop and pitch an idea for a feature story or article. And...go back to the first point in this list!

TIP: Would spending \$3000 on a magazine advertisement have more or less impact than travelling to Sydney to promote the art centre face-to-face at an exhibition opening?

Social media – how to make it work

As part of her PhD at RMIT, Indigo Holcombe-James* partnered with the Araluen Cultural Precinct and Desert to look at the use of digital/social media in the lead-up to and during Desert Mob 2017. She interviewed art centre managers, industry stakeholders, curators and visitors to the gallery. Here are her top tips for art centre managers, based on her preliminary findings.

1. According to curators and buyers, Instagram is the platform they use to connect with art (as opposed to Facebook or Twitter). Government staff and funding bodies favour Facebook.
2. Use your analytics! If you switch your Instagram account to a business account, you can see who your followers are, where they're based, when they're most active and which posts are the most effective. You can use this info to cater your posts. For example, if your purchasing market is mostly based on the east coast, and you know that your Instagram followers have a similar demographic, it makes sense to try and post photos that are relevant to them when they're likely to be active (perhaps between 5 and 7 pm AEST during their commute).
3. Instagram # and @strategies. Use artists' names as #. In interviews,

* Indigo Holcombe-James researches how cultural platforms use digital media. She doesn't have a creative bone in her body and is deeply jealous of those who do. She is currently interested in how factors like remoteness, age and access can inform digital participation. If you want to chat about how your art centre uses digital/social, get in touch via indigo.holcombe-james@rmit.edu.au.

people talked about how they would hear about an artist and want to see more of their work, but if they didn't know which art centre they were from, it was tricky. Using names as # builds up an archive for each artist that is directly attributed to them, and can help buyers find out more.

If you're using # to build a following (like #aboriginalart, #contemporaryart, #australianart), put this in a comment rather than the caption. If you're using # to create an archive for your artists, keep that in the caption to increase visibility.

@tag institutions or curators or public identities into photos (or captions) that are directly connected to them. For example, if you have an exhibition at a gallery, tag the gallery account and the curator's account. Increasing engagement with influential accounts drives your post

up in the algorithm, improving reach and visibility.

4. Industry research says including faces in photos can increase their reach by up to 60%. If you have information to get out that is particularly important, think about using a photo that includes people in it, like an artist with their painting etc.
5. Fix broken links. It sounds obvious... but regularly check the links on the art centre's website and fix Facebook/Instagram/Twitter account links that are broken. This will help increase online visibility.

LEFT Judith Inkamala Pungkarta and Rona Rubuntja Panangka of Hermannsburg Potters delivering a ceramics workshop at the National Gallery of Victoria. Image: Hermannsburg Potters.

RIGHT Betty Chimney and Betty Muffler from Iwantja Arts at Desert Mob 2017. Image: James Henry, Desert.





Exhibitions and commissions

Exhibitions are a primary commercial area. Most art centres work closely with a select group of commercial galleries on an annual exhibition program; artists then work towards those commitments. Always respect the art centre's commercial gallery relationships. Reputable, successful galleries that represent Indigenous artists and art centres are integral to the art centre, providing informed curatorship, documentation, sales, promotion and marketing. These relationships directly impact the art centre's turnover, the artists' income and their careers. Aim for positive, long-term partnerships.

Have state and regional public galleries and cultural institutions on your radar. Make sure curators and collectors

know of the emerging talent at your art centre. Encourage acquisitions and discuss opportunities for showing works that are already in collections. If you're strategising for acquisitions and profile, consider Artbank, too, which intersects with the commercial and non-commercial sectors and rents out artwork in its collection to clients: <http://artbank.gov.au/>.

Program a mix of solo and group shows, a mix of mediums, and a diverse geographic spread. Maybe include one or two international exhibitions. Or pitch for a biennale, commission or visual arts festival. Mix it up across the Indigenous arts sector and broader contemporary arts. Be strategic and plan carefully. Tjanpi Desert Weavers were part of the 2015 Venice Biennale, the Aboriginal Women's Choir commissioned Tapatjatjaka Artists

to print fabric for their costumes, artists from the APY Arts Collective collaborated on a vast commission for the Australian War Memorial, and Yarrenyty Arltare Artists were participants of the 21st Sydney Biennale. If you want to reach a new audience, think beyond the visual arts and Indigenous sectors.

If the art centre produces 50 absolute 'gun' works a year, you need to make them work really well for the art centre, giving them the most exposure and best placement that you can.

Don't over-commit: keep it manageable for the artists, staff and yourself. Allow time and do what you can to enable good art to be made.

On the admin side, always make sure that an exhibition contract is in place and signed by all parties before

sending any artwork. Considerations are: commission, insurance, freight and handling, and (if it is headed overseas) customs declaration and exporting regulations around art made from natural materials. Do a cost-benefit analysis before making any exhibition-associated travel or public program commitments – but don't undervalue the benefits to artists and staff of connecting face-to-face with their market and the broader art world.

LEFT Pamela Taylor and Beryle De Rose beginning a commission. Image: Walkatjara Art.

RIGHT Peter Mungkuri at the Art Gallery of SA (TARNANTHI) with Kulata Tjuta, APY Art Centre Collective, 2017. Image: Rhett Hammerton, Iwantja Arts.



A medium-sized schedule for an art centre might look like this:

January – New York City, group show

February – Brisbane, group show

March – Darwin, emerging artist show

April – Perth, group show

May – Melbourne, solo show

June – Paris, group show

July – Sydney, commission

August – Darwin, Aboriginal Art Fair

September – Desert Mob

October – Adelaide, regional show

November – Hobart, solo show

December – Christmas show in community

Exhibition tips from Warakurna Artists:

- **Allow enough time for artists to create high quality works.**
- **If you get new gallery requests, check out the gallery with the Code and your colleagues at other art centres. Think also about the brand alignment of the gallery to the art centre.**
- **If you have to cancel a show due to sorry business or matters out of your control, it's unfortunate, but it's not the end of the world, and not your fault. It's better to have a high-quality show of amazing works than a poor show.**
- **Your last show is what people remember.**

The top 12 things Yarrenyty Arltene Art Centre thinks about for an exhibition:

1. Making sure the work is really good.
2. Telling people about the art centre so they know why it is so important.
3. Feeling proud that people want to buy the work.
4. Understanding that it takes time for the money to come home.
5. Working together – laughing, telling stories, drinking tea – to make good art for the exhibition.
6. Being proud of each other's work.
7. Going to the exhibitions and talking to people about the art and our art centre.
8. Taking photos of the exhibition and looking at them afterwards – seeing how nice the artwork looks.
9. Making money to buy good things.
10. Thinking about why we make this art.
11. Managing commercial relationships. These are extremely valuable – art centre managers are trusted and employed to nurture and maintain these relationships for the benefits of the artists and art centres. These relationships are emotive and time-consuming – the 'bread and butter' of the art centre.
12. Reputation.

Resale Royalty Scheme

The Resale Royalty Scheme started on 9 June 2010, introduced by the Australian Government to collect and distribute resale royalties to artists across Australia. Copyright Agency Limited was chosen to run the scheme. As of October 2017, over \$5.6million has been generated by the scheme and 64% of the artists receiving royalties are Indigenous.

What is resale royalty? When an artwork – a painting; limited edition photograph, video work or print; weaving, sculpture, carving, etc. – sells a second or further time for over \$1000 through a gallery, auction house, art centre or art dealer, the artist is entitled to receive a 5% royalty. So if an artwork sells a second time for \$1000 through a gallery or auction house, then the artist will be entitled to receive \$50. Key features of the scheme are that:

- it applies to resales of existing and new works
- it applies to a range of original artworks, including limited edition prints authorised by the artist
- it does not apply to a private sale from one individual to another
- all resales of \$1000 or more must be reported
- a royalty is not payable if the person who is selling the work acquired it before the start of the scheme (9 June 2010)
- a royalty is not payable on resales under \$1000
- the scheme will be extended to artworks from countries that have similar schemes.

If you have any questions about the scheme, contact the Copyright Agency visual arts team on 1800 066 844 or resale@copyright.com.au. More information: www.resaleroyalty.org.au.

Licensing

COPYRIGHT AGENCY

The Copyright Act gives visual artists and other creators legal rights to control certain uses of their content by others. It protects their work from being copied without permission, and when they want to allow it to be copied, it can be used to earn money.

When someone wants to copy, share or reproduce one of your artist's works, they'll need permission (a licence) from the copyright owner. The licensing process allows the copyright owner and the person who wishes to reproduce the works the opportunity to work together and agree on the way the work can be used, including conditions such as payment, production quality and acknowledgement.

The copyright owner is usually the artist. If the copyright is given to someone else (this is not usual), the artist will no longer receive payments if the work is copied. Copyright lasts for the lifetime of the artist plus 70 years.

The types of uses you might be asked to licence include reproducing an artwork as a poster, in a book or magazine, adapting it for use on clothing or merchandise, street banners, rugs, homewares, stationery, advertising, building hoardings, and making an artist's work of art available online.

Things to consider

Having made the decision that the maker is a good match for the art centre and the proposed use fits comfortably with how the artist would like to see their work used, the most important thing to do is to put the licence agreement in writing to avoid problems later. Things to consider include:

- Who is the agreement with and are there any third parties involved?
- What is the artwork or selection of works to be used and for what uses/products?
- Specific quantities, time frames and territories in which the use can take place
- Negotiate a suitable fee and payment schedule
- Requirements for attribution and use of the copyright notice
- Avoid any vague or undefined terms such as 'promotion' and 'non-commercial' uses
- Are they required to obtain your approval before any alteration is made to the work?
- Do you require approval and final samples?
- How complex is the agreement and will you need a lawyer?

Don't go into an agreement that doesn't feel right. Seek expert, professional help.

Managing licensing requests

The licensing process can be simple or difficult: licensing requests vary widely. Depending on your expertise and resources, you may wish to handle licensing requests yourself: Arts Law

has useful resources on copyright and licensing. Or you may prefer to use a licensing agent such as Copyright Agency. Check if the art centre is already a member of Copyright Agency: contact 1800 066 844.

Requests for free uses

On occasion, you may be approached by individuals or organisations to use artists' work for free. They will ask you to sign a form to waive fees: a non-exclusive licence, copyright clearance, image reproduction permission, royalty free licence, licence release deed, deed of agreement or waiver. We recommend you consider every request carefully as the artist is entitled to receive fees for reproductions of their artwork, whether from a private corporation, public gallery and museum, or any organisation or individual. If your artists are Copyright Agency members they may already be receiving income via a licence agreement with the requesting party, and these payments will not continue if you sign a new agreement for free use.

Viscopy licensing

Viscopy licensing is the Copyright Agency's dedicated licensing service for visual artists. Copyright Agency works with art centres and their artists providing licensing services that respect the artistic and cultural value in works of art. The Viscopy licensing team are experts in rights management, with experience across a wide range of uses and products from postage stamps to building facades, and can handle everything for you. They will work as closely with you and the artist/s

as you wish or you can leave it all to them - the choice is yours. Simply refer any requests and they will ensure the artwork is reproduced to a high standard, correctly attributed, fairly paid and protected by a licence agreement.

Viscopy has agreements with state and national galleries and museums, auction houses, publishers and other organisations, which means registered artists receive payment for the use of their work. As part of a worldwide network of visual arts management organisations, your artists may also receive licence fees for the use of their works internationally.

Copyright Agency is a not-for-profit organisation. There is no fee to join. To cover the cost of the licensing service, an administration fee is deducted from the income generated for artists.

For more information on Viscopy licensing, the fee structure or any of the services Copyright Agency provides to visual artists (they also manage the statutory licensing schemes for Government and education and the

Resale Royalty Scheme), contact the visual arts team on 1800 066 844 or viscopylicensing@copyright.com.au.

Working with the media

From time to time, the media will contact you for comments, interviews and information. Who is the art centre's no. 1 spokesperson? Organise media training for directors and staff. Ask the journalist what angle they will be taking and who else they're talking to. If it's a phone interview, let the journo know you will be recording the interview too - it can help keep a story straight. Have key messages and statements prepared and statistics at the ready. Think about the most difficult questions that might be asked. Good media coverage impacts on public opinion and adds value to the art centre's brand.

Now that your administrative and legal issues are in check, get your money story straight - maintain all your contracts, make accurate records of transactions, and hence keep the art centre economy sustainable.



Talking to the media is a great way to connect the artist with a wider audience. Image: Tapatjatjaka Art and Craft.

7. FINANCIAL

To be clear about commercial administration, finance and economic activities, it helps to think about their location:

- commercial – in the marketplace, with customers
- administration – in the office and on the computer
- finance – money transactions, at the bank and office, with customers and artists
- economic – in the marketplace, with customers, with artists, with government: production, distribution, consumption, all of it!

The difference between finance and economy is that finance relates only to money: cash in and cash out. Economy relates to the exchange of anything that has value.

Financial management

Here's a simple formula for financial analysis of the art centre:

x number of artists paint y number of paintings per year at an average of z value = total revenue.

On a 60/40 split, 60% is paid to the artist on the sale of the work and 40% to the art centre to operate the business.

On average, if $x = 30$, $y = 20$ and $z = \$500$, total annual revenue = \$300 000 per year. Artists' income would then be \$180 000 and art centre operational contributions (pre-tax) would be \$120 000.

The financial management of the art

centre is vital. Never pretend that you understand something that you don't. Always ask your bookkeeper, accountant and auditor lots of questions. The figures in themselves are not enough: analyse them so you understand all aspects and can manage any risks in a timely way. Know how to read a balance sheet and a profit-and-loss statement. If you don't know, watch a clip on YouTube, ask your accountant to walk you through step-by-step, come to a Desart financial management workshop or do some online tutorials.

A lot of managers have a hard time wrapping their head around how and when to apply GST. It's important to get this right. The Australian Taxation Office has useful information: www.ato.gov.au.

Balance sheet

A balance sheet gives a picture of the financial health of the organisation:

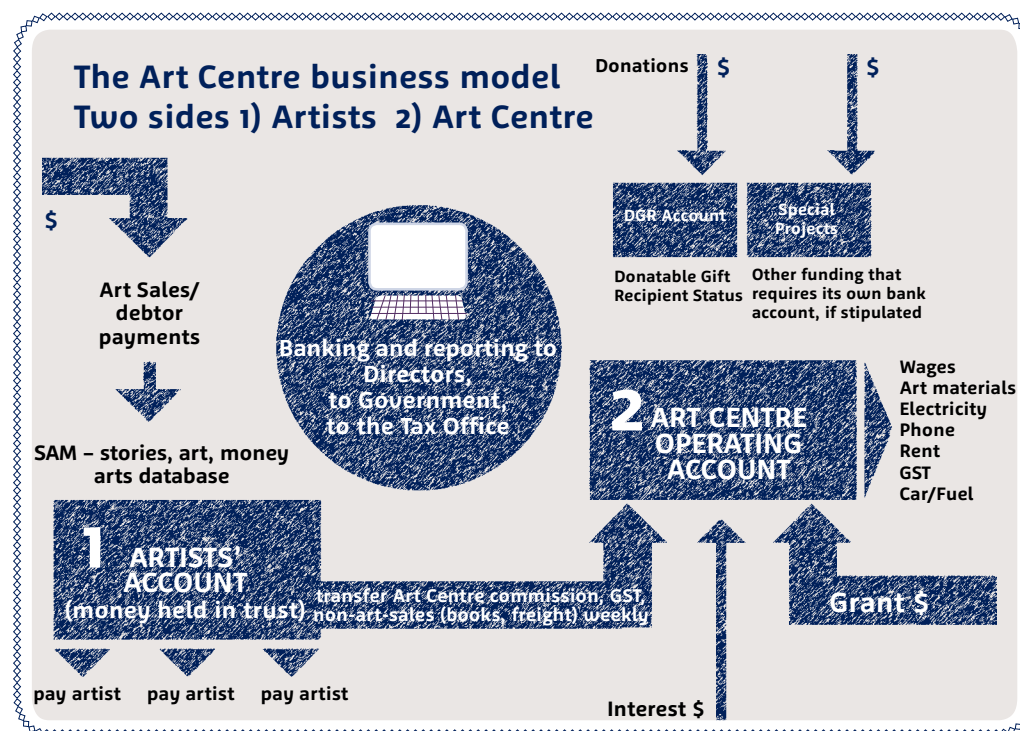
- assets – ownership of items that can be converted into cash
- liabilities – items for which you are committed to make payment
- accumulated surplus – total assets less total liabilities plus current year profit
- profit-and-loss statement
- revenues and expenses for a specific period of time
- shows whether the art centre made or lost money during the period
- revenues – cash inflow; other enhancements of assets
- expenses – cost outflow; loss of assets; liabilities.

Bookkeeping, accountants and auditors

Maintain your audit trail – test it weekly! Your relationship with your accountant or bookkeeper is paramount. Especially in dealing with debtors: make sure that you follow up money due from clients every month with statements. If you have issues securing payment, talk to the Indigenous Art Code and consider employing a debt-collecting agency. Remember how your financial software is integrated with SAM: make sure SAM is up-to-date, including artist payments and entering paid invoices cross-checked with the art centre's bank account (use the SAM checklist on p. 94).

Make sure that your accountant or bookkeeper is available to talk you through any financial issues.

TIP: Financial management of the art centre is high pressured. Reporting the money story to directors is a challenge. Make sure that the accountant provides plain English notations with your reports.



This is a recommended art centre accounts set-up. Diagram inspired by a Desart professional development workshop presented by Tim Acker.

Financial strategies

The art centre's revenue is most likely a mix of funded and activity-generated income. Relying only on government funding and activity-generated income (AGI) is not a sustainable financial strategy for most art centres. Many art centres set sales targets for their AGI. With funding: diversify and deepen, and – as with everything – try to keep it manageable. Relationships with funders, especially with those new to the sector and/or your art centre, require sustained communication and engagement to be successful.

Keep abreast of fundraising opportunities: if Desart's regular funding e-blasts are not landing in your inbox, sign up for them now, and also subscribe to all relevant government, philanthropic agencies' and private sector alerts.

Be proactive. Make (and take!) opportunities to build good relationships with key staff at the art centre's funding agencies and with people who might lead you to new sources of funds in the future. Tap into online fundraising information and resources to improve your knowledge and skills. Most of the funders and agencies listed below have excellent resources on their websites and many offer workshops and webinars to improve fundraising knowledge and skills.

If there is critical infrastructure for

which the art centre needs funding, make sure Desart staff know so that they can direct you to any potential funding programs or sources, or work with you to build a case to lobby for government funds on your behalf.

Government funding ⁷

The majority of most art centres' funded income comes from the Commonwealth Government, in the form of operational funds (commonly salaries and on-costs for managers and art workers) through the **Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support program (IVAIS 'eye-vais')**. The **Department of Communication and the Arts** also has funding programs that support arts and cultural initiatives and activities, including Indigenous languages and arts, exhibition tours, festivals, and community heritage. See <https://www.arts.gov.au/>.

The **Australia Council for the Arts** ('OzCo') is the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body. It offers funding across all forms of artistic practice and all aspects of creation, development, production and distribution. It also has opportunities open only to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, including significant professional development fellowships for artists and emerging curators. OzCo also commissions industry research that informs policy development. See <http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au>.

Relevant departments of the NT, SA and WA governments deliver on their

respective arts and cultural policies and funding. Check out the funding programs offered by your State/Territory and make sure you're signed up for their funding alerts, so you're onto opportunities quickly. These are the channels through which – in a good year – funding for capital works and infrastructure come.

Arts NT

<https://dtc.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/arts-nt>

Arts South Australia

<http://arts.sa.gov.au/>

Culture and the Arts (WA)

<http://www.dca.wa.gov.au/>

Regional Arts Australia (RAA)

manages the Regional Arts Fund, the Commonwealth Government's arts funding reserved for people and communities in regional areas of Australia. This includes a Quick Response grant program. (RAA also facilitates the biennial national Regional Arts Conference.) <https://regionalarts.com.au/>

The **Regional Arts Fund** is administered mostly by statutory bodies of State/Territory governments. Check out the opportunities and resources relevant to your State/Territory:

Arts NT

<https://dtc.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/arts-nt>

Country Arts SA

<https://www.countryarts.org.au/>

Country Arts WA

<https://www.countryartswa.asn.au/>

Creative Partnerships Australia has a remit to create opportunities for art and investment, bringing arts, donors and business together. Its funding programs are financed by the Commonwealth Government, and it offers coaching and mentoring to sharpen your fundraising skills and attract and leverage investments. <https://www.creativepartnershipsaustralia.org.au/>

Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding can be spectacularly successful if you have excellent, supportive networks, a brilliant and persuasive idea and plan, and the human resources to power a consistent campaign. Popular reward-based platforms include Pozible, Kickstarter, GoFundMe, GiveNow and Chuffed. Papulankutja Artists successfully raised funds to purchase a new transportable to use as its gallery after a fire damaged its buildings a few years ago. But crowdfunding is not for everybody because it is labour-intensive and, if you don't reach your project target, it can literally be a dead loss (and you can damage the art centre's reputation). The pros and cons of crowdfunding are nicely outlined in NAVA's factsheet on the topic.

Creative Partnerships Australia offers good information on crowdfunding, too. It also manages the Australian Cultural Fund, which is an arts-focused platform that lures donors with tax-deductibility instead of rewards, and with this platform, you actually get whatever amounts have been pledged even if you don't reach your project target.

⁷ When a government changes, so does all of its 'machinery': priorities, policies, and names of its departments and programs. The information here is thus subject to the political winds of change...

Matched funding

Matched funding is increasingly becoming the norm. Essentially, to be eligible for some funding programs, you have to match the contribution you are seeking either from your own reserves or in-kind support, or by securing other funding and/or in-kind support. It's all about leveraging.

Creative Partnerships Australia has a funding program called Plus1 that puts you in the driving seat to run a targeted fundraising campaign and offers (capped) funding to match your fundraising.

Philanthropy

Philanthropic trusts and foundations have clear aims and strict guidelines on how they can distribute funds. Most will only fund applicants that have Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status, endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office. Getting DGR status can be a really complex process but with DGR endorsement, you can attract tax-deductible donations *and* tap into philanthropic wealth.

If the art centre has DGR status, check out the useful tips on Creative Partnerships Australia's website for how to go about seeking philanthropic funding. As they say, a good starting point is to invest in a subscription to **Philanthropy Australia's** Directory of Funders, a list of more than 200 grant-making organisations. Philanthropy Australia also offers grant-seeking webinars (for a modest fee).

If you go it alone, research which philanthropics are investing in

organisations or projects similar to yours to get a sense of what a good funding match looks like.

Creative Partnerships Australia can help connect you with philanthropic funders and support you through the process.

Other sources

Corporate partnerships are an essential part of the funding model for lots of arts and cultural organisations in Australia – but not many art centres yet. Creative Partnerships Australia offers tailored advice and support in this area.

Other fundraising avenues include trust funds (e.g. the Namatjira Legacy Trust works in partnership with Iltja Ntjarra Many Hands Art Centre) and social impact investing (Impact Investing Australia has grants: <https://impactinvestingaustralia.com/>).

Money stories

Misunderstandings around money can be the no. 1 point of tension in an art centre, so make sure you understand this area properly yourself. You'll need to get your head around the art centre's money story and how that relates to payments to artists and their money stories. Check the art centre's procedures manual for financial processes, including artists' payments, and see Financial Management, pp. 120–1. Once you're across the money story, stay across it.

For the art centre's money story, focus on the knowledge of directors. They have legal responsibilities that you need to help them meet, and if they are well informed they can help you make sure art workers and artists understand

this side of the art centre's business, too. Regularly share the art centre's money story with all of the art centre's members in ways that allow them to understand. Use an interpreter. Put things in writing. Respect legal and personal privacy requirements for each artist.

There are two specific areas of an art centre's money story that often cause people to worry: why they haven't been paid although their artwork has gone to a gallery, and why the price tag was, say, \$9500 but they got paid only \$3420. Follow the advice of a highly experienced Desart director: 'Explain the artists' money story to them every week, in English and in language.'

Here are some other points to consider:

- Don't misuse your positional power.
- Be accountable and transparent with payment processes: involve the chairperson in the banking authorisation of payments and don't delegate your responsibility for authorising payments to your bookkeeper or accountant.
- Every artist has a right to be kept informed of their money story and to decide on a payment strategy that works for them and the art centre. (Don't ever assume it's okay to pay using purchase orders though – check the art centre's policies and procedures.)
- Set a regular day for doing artists' payments – not every day of the week! Most art centres' money story day is Thursdays because that is a common money story day for other income earners in communities.

- Understand how the art centre uses the income it receives from its commission so you're able to clearly explain that.
- Work with the directors to establish and maintain artwork pricing strategies and methods (see Pricing on pp. 109–10).
- Regularly communicate the art centre's financial position and how it compares with last year and earlier. Know what is influencing whether it is strong or weak.

Art centre managers' money story tips:

'Undersell and over-deliver! By this I mean: lower artists' expectations. If a painting is going to bring an artist \$1200 pay, say: You should get about \$1000. Then, when they get the extra they are super happy, whereas if you say their pay is going to be \$1200 and it comes in at \$1180, they will be very disappointed and might think you are doing something wrong. If money is due in two weeks, say one month; then, if it comes in in two weeks, they are super happy.'

'Be clear about the money story before people participate in anything, including painting. It doesn't have to be precise but if you are asking people if they want to go to Perth and do inma (cultural performance), for example, say that they will get about \$500 pay each if that's what it is, or that there is no pay because this is for promotion etc. That way they can make an informed choice. People have a different relationship to money and can misunderstand what is fair pay. If it's talked about before the event, no one

gets let down. No good people thinking they will get enough for a Toyota only to end up with \$1000. That's when people get angry.'

The Aboriginal arts economy in the Centre: marketing and policy challenges

JON ALTMAN*

The Aboriginal visual arts economy in remote and very remote Australia generally, and in the geographic jurisdiction of Desart, can be best understood as a form of cultural production destined for the market economy. But what is produced, and hopefully sold, emanates from very human effort and complex social and cultural relations that are rarely well understood by the buyers. The production of visual arts specifically for national and global art markets by remote-living desert people has had a short, complex and dynamic history. Artists in central Australia were among the earliest players in the re-orientation and transformation of visual culture from the customary ceremonial context to Western tourist and fine art markets.

The Indigenous arts economy has been an outstanding success because of an unusual commensurability between what Aboriginal artists produce and what mainly non-Aboriginal audiences

appreciate and purchase. This is despite some tensions in the Indigenous domain about the appropriate forms that art for sale can take; and ongoing debates not just about authenticity but also about how to limit competition from 'fake' art that is manufactured without proper authority or licensing. A current (2017–18) parliamentary inquiry into this issue is struggling to come to terms with the complexity of the Indigenous arts sector, with this complexity explaining in part the limited information available on the sector's market size or its segmentation, nationally and regionally. What is indisputable is that the arts are vitally important to the household economies of artists.

Historically the genesis of the sector can be closely associated with a period of decolonisation of remote Aboriginal Australia from the 1970s that is recognised today as a policy era of relative 'self-determination'. Many policy changes during this period assisted to incubate Aboriginal arts production and marketing including the granting of land rights, support for the outstations movement, and a state willingness to countenance and facilitate alternate forms of livelihood for Aboriginal people where they lived on country. Unfortunately, this benign policy setting has changed considerably in the last decade creating significant challenges to the Indigenous arts economy.

* Jon Altman is research professor at the Alfred Deakin Institute of Citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin University, Melbourne and an emeritus professor at the Australian National University. He has a long involvement in the Aboriginal visual arts sector, including chairing the 1989 review of the Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Industry that developed the framework for the still current IVAIS support model.

From the outset, the Indigenous visual arts economy was highly reliant on state support and promotion primarily because the marketing channels between remote living artists and metropolitan buyers were missing. This situation provides the main basis for justifying ongoing public funding support for the sector. But it's important to remember that artists have also made significant financial and other investments in the mediating organisations that market their art.

Two institutions of Indigenous Australia have been central to the sustainability of the sector. First, core support for art centres that began in the early 1970s with funding from the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council that continues today under the federal government's Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Strategy (IVAIS) program.

Second, basic income support that came from the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme for many artists from 1977 till its abolition in 2015.

From an Aboriginal perspective, the production of art does not just reflect economic imperatives, although livelihood is of course of crucial importance; it is also about identity and political representation. The arts represent a rare mixing of the cultural and the commercial, what renowned anthropologist WEH Stanner once termed 'the Dreaming and the market', which seems to work.

2017 Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards winners, (L-R) Anwar Young, Frank Young and Unrupa Rhonda Dick, with their work Kulata Tjuta – Wati kulunypa (Many Spears – Young fella story). Image: Fiona Morrison, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.

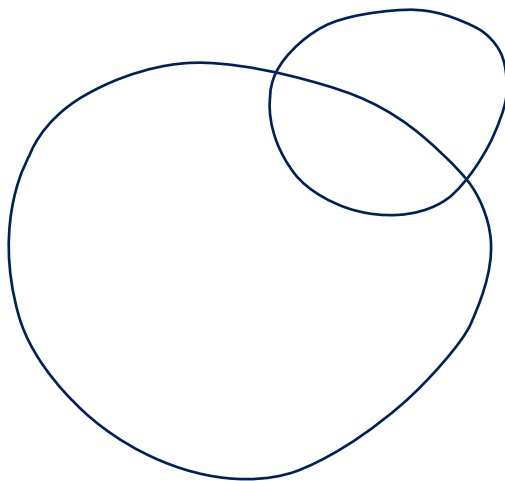


But arts production is undertaken in difficult, often impoverished circumstances. And for many Aboriginal people, especially in the most remote regions, the arts represent the only means to earn cash beyond social security income support. Hence while the arts provide opportunity to engage with market capitalism through the commodification of culture, this engagement must be carefully mediated and managed as it is risky and liable to demand fluctuations. In Central Australia, there is a diversity of art styles and forms whose market popularity can rise or fall. And in recent years some key changes to institutional arrangements—especially in introducing the highly contentious Community Development Program and its associated and onerous work-for-the-dole arrangements—have undermined the potential viability of the sector.

While the sector has faced enormous challenges from the Global Financial Crisis, changes to superannuation laws that make purchasing Indigenous fine art as investment art less attractive, and competition from the inauthentic manufactured sector, it has proven highly resilient. It would be wrong though to imagine that the arts will be the only mainstay of remote Indigenous economies. Not all people can be successful artists but in remote Indigenous Australia the arts will always be a significant component of complex hybrid or plural economies.

Ensuring sustainability when faced with fluctuations in market demand and changing buyer preferences is an enormous challenge. So is the need to

maintain the expressive authenticity of arts practice that is based on connection to country and custom. Government support and art centre policy and practice will all need to be carefully crafted to recognise such realities with some form of basic income for artists the top priority in my view. If arts marketing institutions and income support are sensibly structured and governed, then the arts will continue to make important contributions in many places.



Now you're doing such a great job of the finances and your art centre economy is strong, you begin to notice that the art centre could do with a paint job, the packing table needs replacing, taking on volunteers would be good, maybe the art centre needs a flat or transportable? The men have been talking about a workshop for carving ... time to get political and social.



8. POLITICAL

Art centres in themselves are an expression of political power. That Aboriginal people continue to live on country and express their connection to country, in spite of colonisation, is a political statement. Think about how rock art and songlines and ceremony and contemporary cultural expressions are brought into the judicial process during Native Title claims, too.

Political capital or political power can make a great difference to the art centre. Self-determination is a fundamentally important right that you need to understand. It is about Aboriginal people's real decision-making power and responsibility for what happens on their lands, in their communities, in their governing systems, and in their development strategies – to make people's lives better in ways that they want. Support your directors to exercise their governing powers in the art centre,

Joanna Byrne (Manager) and Charlotte Phillipus (Chairperson) having a meeting at Papunya Tjupi. Image: Rhett Hammerton, Desart.

and work with the art centre team to embed self-determination in the art centre's governance and management processes and in the art centre's internal culture. In the art centre's external environment, this involves engaging with politicians and other influential people, and the broader political environment. At a minimum, this will include directors, artists and art workers contributing their views to the advocacy work that Desart conducts on their behalf.

Governance

Governance is a big, broad, fundamentally important term. It relates to kinship systems and traditional protocols, leadership and also particular legislation.



Governance culture and environment. (Adapted from the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute's Governance Toolkit: <http://toolkit.aigi.com.au/>)

Governance – keeping the art centre on track

MAGGIE KAVANAGH

Aboriginal governance in the community will be based on traditional law and is mostly separated into women's business and men's business. Your role in this is to accommodate art centre's members commitments to cultural activities and respect cultural authority.

All art centres should have Aboriginal decision-making at the centre of their operations: through legal incorporation, a constitutional steering committee or a subcommittee. As the art centre manager, you are responsible for corporate leadership, which includes all the activities that support and assist directors in functional and transparent governance leadership and decision-making.

The corporate governance of art centres usually refers to corporations registered with ORIC (www.oric.gov.au). The Australian Government – Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations offers training, resources, recruitment assistance and more for registered corporations. Not all art centres are registered with ORIC; some operate under a larger Aboriginal organisation, some are housed within regional or local governments and others act as an annex to a school or a non-government organisation.

Governance at the art centre is a mix of cultural authority, communal and collective decision-making, men's and women's business, and ORIC compliance, such as ensuring member listings are current and holding annual general meetings.

Art centres hold a special place in Aboriginal communities. They are one of the few spaces where local governance control is in the hands of Aboriginal people.

The most important message when talking about governance is not to be daunted by it. Simply put, governance refers to:

HOW YOU MAKE ALL THE SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES IN YOUR ART CENTRE WORK WELL SO IT CAN STAY ON TRACK

The governance space in Aboriginal arts centres is one of two-way governance. It reflects the reality of living under Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal laws, cultures, rules and accountabilities. This means making sure governance arrangements and practices reflect the self-determination of the artists, members and community, while also meeting the legal and compliance requirements and accountability of regulatory bodies such as the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC).

Art centres are at the heart of balancing the two world views – they sit in the middle. It is a constant balancing act and one you have to keep working at. Working with people whose first language is not English and who have limited literacy is challenging. Those who can do the balancing act well will have optimal outcomes and a happier workplace.

Managers and directors need to have a good grasp about how the separation of powers work, between the governance side (the directors) and the management side (the staff, headed up by the manager). It is important to understand that there is a strict boundary fence between the two sides. Everyone needs to be clear about the rules, roles and responsibilities and to know who can do what – depending what side of the boundary fence you sit.

The following is a list of key good governance practices for consideration. It is not a complete list but it flags some key areas that managers can make sure artists, members and directors discuss and understand. Perhaps they can be woven into meetings, induction sessions or workshops – whatever works best for you. They will help build up governance knowledge and capacity. Remember to always use plain English and not fall into the trap of speaking in jargon.

- Decide on clear guiding principles that will steer the arts centre's work and way of working. It is a good place to start as it reminds everyone why we have art centres.
- Everyone needs to be familiar with their rule book – this sets out the rules and makes clear what people can and can't do. It's a bit like the bible for the governance of the art centre. Go through it section by section and make sure people understand what is in it. It will take a few attempts but it is worth persevering with this exercise. (Make sure that you, as the manager, have a firm understanding of your rule book first.)
- Make sure directors and staff all understand their jobs and responsibilities. If the art centre is incorporated under ORIC, directors and the manager have legal duties. People need to understand them.
- Come up with a code of conduct – a 'working well together' agreement that is determined by and agreed to by everyone. This is an important tool that can be used if things are going off track. If the art centre already has a code of conduct, review it with everyone.
- Make sure directors and artists are clear about what resources the art centre has and how they are used, e.g. staff, vehicle, infrastructure etc.
- Talk about how to have good meetings and what are the best procedures.
- Agree about how best to make good decisions.
- Develop a policy together about how to manage conflict and complaints.
- Work out Money Story rules jointly and have clear rules about the process and implementation.
- Make sure financial information is presented to the directors in a way that they understand so they know the financial position of the art centre (this is a legal duty).
- Involve everyone actively with planning activities for the art centre.
- Talk about the wider environment so people understand the bigger world in which art centres operate.

When thinking about governance in art centres, it is good to be reminded that people support what they create.

Managers should ask themselves constantly: Am I engaging all those who have a stake? A key point for directors is that they should see their job as one of stewardship. This emphasises their role of taking care of the centre: the staff, artists, the resources and the future direction.

Most importantly for both managers and directors there needs to be good communication, trust and respect for each other. This will ensure that everyone is working in the same direction.

And finally, a reminder from Kofi Annan, the former director general of the United Nations:

Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development.

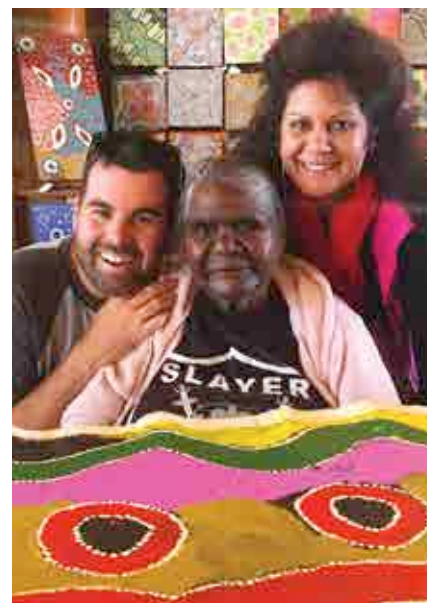
Further information and resources about governance can be found at the following websites:

www.oric.gov.au (ORIC) – templates for governance activities such as minute-taking at meetings and useful information.

TIP: Use the excellent, free Indigenous Governance Toolkit that's online at the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute: <http://toolkit.aigi.com.au/>

Policy environment

Lots of policy areas impact the art centre, including: Indigenous affairs, arts, employment, health and business. There are times when you might need to read an arts policy (if you're applying for funding that requires applicants to meet policy priorities, for example) but you don't need to sit up at night reading government policy – Desart does that! You do, however, need to make sure that visitors to the community understand the role of the art centre as the arts and cultural authority and a place of cultural legitimacy in the community.



Barbara Tjikatu Nipper with Chansey Peach MLA and Senator Malarndirri McCarthy, 2017. Image: Walkatjara Art.

Political engagement

If the art centre has government funding for a project, then you probably also have a contractual obligation to invite to any project launch or opening a politician whose portfolio is aligned with your funding. Check your funding contracts and follow through on this. It's a positive way of getting onto political radars.

Talk to government ministers and their advisors and those in opposition also. Don't be shy: tell them all about the art centre. This is an important part of art centre advocacy.

When you receive notice that a politician is visiting the community, especially if their portfolio is directly related to the art centre – such as the Minister for the Arts or Indigenous Affairs – get in contact with their

advisors. Send through background information on the language and culture of the region. Offer to host an event: a media conference, morning tea or performance. Work closely with your chairperson so that they can provide a 'Welcome to Country' and a tour of the art centre. Prepare a simple briefing document with key issues and raise them with the minister.

Research

Whatever its stated goal, research is always political, even if not explicitly so. It can produce data and evidence that might subsequently be used to influence policy and funding priorities, or to contextualise or inspire an exhibition project. Research reports can be a great source of information and data to inform art centre planning or back your funding applications.

But there are invariably multiple stakeholders and there is always something at stake – and it's not always something that can be anticipated.

Develop a research policy with your directors (see p. 92) and never agree to the art centre participating in research without the directors' informed consent.

Keep an eye out for the Australia Council's research reports. It has an important role conducting research that intersects with art centre work and the policy environment.

Recent large-scale research endorsed by Desart was the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Economies project, led by the Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation (CRC-REP). This national research investigated the production and sale of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, focusing on remote art centres in order to better

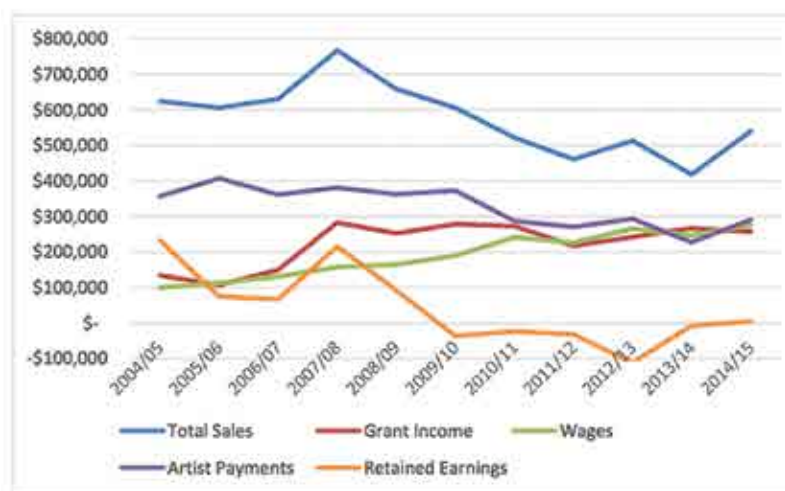
understand the scope and scale of the sector and what factors impact its sustainability. Some of the outputs of this project are informing Desart's development of the SAM Database. And the graph below is part of the useful published outcomes that are available online: <https://old.crc-rep.com/research/enterprise-development/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-art-economies/project-outputs>

Community politics

In communities, as in all aspects of society, elites often step to the front. Be aware that sometimes it is the little old lady or man sitting on the edge of things who has the cultural authority.

The political is tied closely to the social – or social capital.

Key financial indicators for Western Desert art centres, 2004/05–2014/15. From: The Art Economies Value Chain reports; CRC-REP Research Report CR015, T. Acker, 2016, Ninti One Ltd.



The directors of Kaltjiti Arts hosting the Prime Minister, October 2016; L to R: Mantijanu Lennon (Director), Inawintji Scales, Skye O'Meara, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, and Rowan Ramsey MP. Image: APY Art Centre Collective.

9. SOCIAL

Some would argue that without social capital an art centre will not work: you need friends and supporters.

Social capital is made up of all those valuable networks, friends and supporters. It is nothing unless it is activated – what is the point in the curator at the National Gallery of Victoria loving the work from the art centre if you don't communicate? Stay in touch with all friends of the art centre and keep them excited about the art centre. Use social/digital media as part of your communication strategy – see the tips on pp. 112–13.

'Observe as much as possible, and wait. Soon enough you will understand the complex politics among artists in your art centre and beyond into the rest of community, and between communities / among art centre managers in your region and more broadly / among curators/gallerists/collectors... You need to think carefully about yourself in these matrices – you are not invisible and you are being positioned by others, so try to carefully position yourself.'
– *Studio Coordinator, Tangentyere Artists*

TIP: At a Desart Art Centre Conference, 'from art centre to art centre' was identified as the most important social capital. The Desart network is 40+ art centre members strong. Activate it!

Friends of the art centre

Most communities and art centres have long-standing relationships (friendships) with people who have supported the artists and the art centre. Often these people (friends of the art centre) can be frustrated with re-establishing relationships with new managers. Your handover from the previous manager and induction by Desart staff will provide you with guidance in this area. Call key people in your first week, introduce yourself and let them know you're looking forward to their continued support and the exciting times ahead.

Unscrupulous people

There is also negative social capital: think of that friend who offers you a cigarette when you're trying to quit or that person who always owes you money. Some people have a negative impact on the art centre and artists.

Be aware that some people may take advantage of new staff to fabricate relationships. Despite the work of the Indigenous Art Code, there are unscrupulous people in the industry, which is why it is very important to take relationships slowly. Be open and friendly, but always seek the expertise of the art centre artists, governing committee and the Code. Your handover from the previous manager and induction by Desart staff will also guide you in this area.

Always seek advice and take your time in decision-making. It is important

to check with the art centre's senior artists, Desart and nearby art centres. Relationships are complex, difficult and valuable – contact Desart's Strong Business Program for advice or to request assistance and mentoring.

TIP: Central to your role at the art centre is traversing and mediating between worlds and cultures, artists and the marketplace, good deals and not-so-good deals, culture and commerce. Your relationships are the key.

10. BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built environment comprises all the artificial structures around you. We're not covering all that here but read on for advice about vehicles, driving out bush, and how to tackle art centre capital works and building projects.

Capital works

Peak bodies and art centres in Central Australia work hard to lobby for government funds for capital works and major infrastructure projects to improve art centre facilities, including staff housing. Occasionally there are welcome funding injections: in 2017 the SA Government committed funds for security upgrades for APY art centres, and the NT Government rolled out several infrastructure grant programs. For art centres in the NT, the Aboriginal Benefits Account continues to be a primary source of funding for major works.

Tjala Arts in Amata made a presentation at the 2012 Desart Art Centre Conference about what they had learnt from several major infrastructure projects, including an art centre building, and it is still very relevant advice: 'Remember community – it is hard for Aboriginal people with dire housing needs to see infrastructure money going to whitefellas' housing.'

Step back and create room for directors and artists to lobby direct:

'Get the money story budget early from your staff – Anangu hate a late money story: it makes everyone worried. It is hard for Anangu to see money for whitefella staff housing in some communities where there are not enough houses for Anangu, but having good staff is so important for your art centre. And art centre staff will stay in the community if you look after them with a decent wally [house].'

Start planning on the ground so if the funds come tomorrow you are shovel-ready: secure the site as early as possible. It's better if everyone in the community is sold on your need for funding. Involve all relevant stakeholders and encourage other stakeholders to advocate on behalf of the art centre.

Identify suitable under-utilised and unused housing or infrastructure resources in community, and ask for use of it once a week for the rest of your life or negotiate peppercorn rent. (We know of an art centre that negotiated a lease that actually stated a cost of 'one peppercorn' per annum!)

Managing building projects

SUE DUGDALE*

This information is intended to assist art centres with capital works projects. It is not an exhaustive list of things you'll need to consider, and all projects are different.

Land tenure and authorities

First of all, find out the status of the land you want to use, even if you are already on it. If the land is not a formal lot, there are many more issues you'll need to deal with than are listed here.

- Does the art centre own the land or have permission to use it?
- Who has a say in how the art centre uses the land? Whose permission do we need?
- If the art centre has a building or land lease, check it for relevant clauses.
- Consult the art centre's directors, other local senior cultural advisors and/or community councils.
- Get AAPA clearance if required (NT only).
- It may not be possible to get services to all areas, and connections can be very expensive if the services are not nearby. Consult service authorities regarding connecting or upgrading electricity, water and sewer services to your lot, what is involved, and an idea of cost.
- If you are engaging a project manager, you can ask them to follow up these approvals as part of their services.

The requirements for building and planning approvals are complex and vary across the NT/SA/WA. It is important to follow the correct approval processes, so engage a building certifier or other experienced consultant to advise you on the requirements for your project. Each state has a list of registered certifiers and architects.

How long will it take?

If there are no lengthy land tenure issues to resolve first, a small project (say up to \$300 000) might take 12 months. A medium project (say up to \$1m) might take 18 months. A larger project (\$1m to \$3m) might take two years. Projects can easily take longer than this as there are many variables.

Keep in mind that faster is not always better. Thorough is always good. If you've employed a project manager, they should be able to give you a realistic timeframe.

What will the build cost?⁸

You will generally get more value from extending or altering an existing building than starting from scratch.

If your building project is a small one, seek advice from Desart on the scope and cost of similar projects. Get professional advice and competitive indicative quotes. Allow extra in your project budget for cost escalation. Include service connection costs.

If you have a medium or larger project in mind, quotes from a builder will not establish your whole-of-project costs.

Consider employing an experienced project manager to prepare a concept design for you and get a 'concept stage' costing from a professional cost consultant. Funding bodies like this level of preparation, and it also forms the basis for good project management. Obtain further costings at key stages throughout the project. Ask your project manager to get an early-stage costing from a qualified cost consultant for your 'whole-of-project' costs. This should include consultants' fees, the construction cost, authorities' fees and charges, service connection costs, escalation, project contingency for unforeseen items, administration and accounting costs, loose furniture and equipment, IT fit-out and equipment and other items.

Transportables and ATCO-type buildings are cheaper than a new build, but they are also lesser in quality: you get what you pay for. Transportables can be a satisfactory solution to a tight budget and can sometimes be delivered sooner than a conventional building. Other costs will still be the same: establishing land tenure, paying for service connections, creating disabled access, so over a whole project budget transportables don't save as much as may first appear.

Can we afford to own it?

All buildings have ongoing maintenance requirements and costs. The bigger the building, the higher the costs. Consider whether the art centre can afford to own a large building before proceeding.

In particular, heating and cooling systems can be very costly to run. You may have a 'swampie' now and feel that a ducted heating /cooling system would be better, but obtain actual power usage before making this commitment and calculate the cost of electricity. If you are undertaking a larger project, request an estimate of all maintenance and replacement costs for the life of the building, showing an amount per year from the start of occupation.

Got the funding!⁹ What's next?

Once your funding is secured, act promptly. A delay at the outset introduces unnecessary pressures and risks for meeting any funding deadlines.

Ask other art centres to see how they went about it and get their advice on the consultants they used, and what they would do differently if they were starting again.

Engage an experienced project manager; get fixed quotes and a detailed description of their services so you can make a well informed decision about who to employ.

Set up your own processes in relation to the project, including record keeping, accounting, contracts with consultants and contractors – make it thorough enough for your organisation's accountability and for handing over to new staff if necessary (construction projects often outlive staff).

Be prepared for the amount of work involved with a project even when you

* Sue Dugdale is an architect and project manager based in Alice Springs.

8 Most capital infrastructure grant programs will require three cost quotes.

9 See Financial Strategies on pp. 122–4.

have a project manager/architect on board. Your consistent engagement as the client is key to the success of the project.

The design process

To get the most out of the design process, establish who should be involved in it – a group of interested people including artists and staff can bring several perspectives and local wisdom to the project. Write your own brief: lists of aspirations, functional requirements, items that need rectifying (if you are starting with an existing building), even if all of the items don't seem to go together.

Invest time and resources in getting the design right. Most design processes need some open 'brainstorming' time, some critical evaluation, checking against the budget, and some time for review.

Quality matters

How do I get quality construction that won't cause problems later?

- Engage with the building design during the planning and documentation stages so that you do not need to make changes during construction.
- Use a builder who has a good reputation – find out by asking their previous clients.
- Have a thorough contract with your builder, even if they are a local community organisation.
- Have your project manager or someone experienced in the construction industry check the builder's work and administer the contract.

- Include a 'defects liability period' in your contract. A 12-month period is standard in the construction industry.
- Ask your project manager how they will manage issues of quality and standards. (Mandatory requirements vary across NT/SA/WA.) All buildings require maintenance on a regular basis. Consider whether a perceived 'defect' is really a requirement for ongoing maintenance and not the fault of a builder.

Existing projects or projects 'gone wrong'

If you've inherited an existing building project, review how far along the project is and collate all relevant records. Contact the project manager (if there is one) and obtain a briefing on the project to date. If the project is running well, confirm the budget and program and support the project to continue.

If the project has stalled or is not going well, assess how many steps back you can take to establish good project management, including engaging a project manager, establishing a realistic project budget and scope of work. You may need to consult a lawyer, and you may need to seek variations to any funding agreements for the project.

Art centre vehicles

Also known as: Troopy, Toyota, Truck, Motorcar, *Mutuka*, *Mutekaye*... Vehicles make community life go around. They are integral to getting in and out of the community, visiting country, hunting, ceremony, status and much more.

Mutukas are an important resource in communities: they are often at the centre of intense humbug. Having a clear vehicle policy in place developed at the governance level will assist in looking after this art centre resource.

When a vehicle goes on a trip it can often get waylaid on other journeys. The vehicle may be going to pick up an artist or drop off materials and all other sorts of needs come into play:

- transporting people
- passing on important news
- picking up and dropping off supplies
- checking in on family
- general checking up and cruising.

You will need to choose early on whether you stress out over these trips or not. In reality, these community needs will always exist – you just need to maintain some balance and fairness over the use of the vehicle to ensure that it doesn't go on hunting trips or to neighbouring communities or in to town when it is needed for art centre business. Contact the Desert Strong Business Program if you want help to develop a vehicle policy.

Be aware of duty-of-care and due

diligence issues in transporting aged and frail people and getting them in and out of vehicles.

Important: please, please, please do a 4WD course as soon as possible.

This is essential for your safety, the safety of your passengers and the maintenance of the vehicle. If you have done a course in the past, consider a refresher course. There are several training providers in Alice Springs, including:

- Direct 4WD <https://www.direct4wd.com.au/> (Joel Fleming)
- Charles Darwin University <http://www.cdu.edu.au/> (VET course).

You might've heard the phrase 'kartiya (whitefellas) are like Toyotas (troopies) – use 'em until they break down and then get a new one'. It's an expression heard across Central Australia and the Top End. It's okay! Troopies are highly valued: they have skin, take you hunting, provide kudos, bring babies home and take bodies to the grave. So it's okay to be a 'troopy' – just make sure you check your rego annually and book in for a regular service!

Driving out bush¹⁰

Before you drive off anywhere, at a bare minimum:

- Check the spare tyres (two is a safe minimum) and make sure they are in good condition and properly inflated.
- Check the tyre pressures (on dirt roads, your tyre pressure should be around 35kPa (5 psi) lower than on bitumen roads).

¹⁰ Thanks to community workers Margaret and David Hewitt for some of this advice; between them they have been safely driving around out bush for over 100 years.



Avoid getting bogged like this! Image: Daniel Featherstone, courtesy: Ngaanyatjarra Media.

- Check the oil.
- Know where the jack, jack handle, and wheel spanner is and have a chunk of wood to support the jack in sandy terrain. A long-handled shovel is useful, too. Check that the jack is not broken.
- Practice changing a tyre (if you haven't changed one on a 4WD before).
- Charge up the art centre's satellite phone and/or EPIRB and make sure you know how to operate them.
- Take at least 20L of water with you plus spare water. If you don't need it, someone else on the road might be grateful for it.
- Carry enough fuel to get you to your destination if there won't be a chance to refuel enroute.

Remember that a 4WD does not handle like a normal passenger vehicle. Make sure you know how to engage and disengage four-wheel drive and what situations to use it in. A 4WD is:

- Heavier and slower to respond to your actions
- More inclined to roll over due to its higher centre of gravity

- Likely to require greater stopping distances.

The most common challenge you will encounter – other than vast distances – are the roads themselves. Deep sand can make steering unpredictable, patches of 'bulldust' can be hard to spot and are dangerous, gravel can make roads slippery, floods, washouts and boggy mud can trap you, dense roadside vegetation makes it hard to see cattle and camels, sharp objects can stake your tyres... Concentrate hard! Always be on the lookout for cattle, camels and kangaroos on the road. Art centre members know their roads well and will probably be able to spot wildlife long before you. Ask your passengers to keep an eye out and warn you of any dangers.

Take sun glare into account when planning your drives. It's no fun driving straight into the sun – and it's dangerous: the glare can cause real blind spots and strain your eyes.

Avoid mud and water if you can. There is a very real chance of getting bogged. If you do have to drive through mud, clean under the vehicle as soon as you

can – desert mud is like concrete when it dries.

Let someone know where you are going and the approximate time you expect to arrive. Before departure discuss what steps they should take if they do not hear from you within an agreed time of your estimated arrival. Remember to call them on safely arriving!

Don't assume that you can travel at the same speed on gravel or dirt roads that you would on the highway – reduce speed by at least 30 km/hour. Most accidents on gravel roads occur on bends in the road – slow down when approaching a bend, but do not apply the brakes suddenly.

Secure everything that is heavy and likely to be thrown around in a rollover – especially if the vehicle does not have a safety barrier behind the rear seat.

Don't put heavy weights on a roof rack or load it too high – this can raise the centre of gravity and increase the chances of a rollover.

If you accidentally put petrol in a diesel fuel tank, don't start the vehicle. You'll need to get someone to drain the tank, otherwise you'll seriously damage the engine.

If you are planning an off-road trip, perhaps for gathering bush tucker or visiting traditional sites, do not be persuaded to drive in areas where tyres can be staked easily.

If you break down, stay with the vehicle. A missing vehicle is easier to find than missing people.

Road conditions and closures

Check online for the latest road closure information or call the community office, community services manager or police for local conditions. Remember that there are penalties for driving on a road that is officially closed. Roads can be closed due to flash floods, and dirt roads can quickly turn into a boggy mess.

NT: Call 1800 246 199 or visit www.roadreport.nt.gov.au.

SA: For road conditions through the APY Lands, contact local police.

WA: Some shires have online information, or contact local police or the community office.

Roads can also be closed due to business or ceremony, usually in the summer months in Central Australia. Always check with community members before you plan to drive anywhere over summer, so people have an opportunity to let you know whether it's safe to do so or not. Ceremony road closures may be indicated by 44-gallon drums with a plank of wood, a pile of branches or large logs. Never enter these areas, and if you accidentally get caught in the wrong place, always follow instructions. You might be asked to huddle down so that you are not visible and are safe from the power of things not intended for you.

If in doubt don't drive.



Warlayirti Artists signage near Balgo.
Image: Warlayirti Artists.

Knowledge bank

In addition to links and references throughout the Guidebook, here we flag some things that will help you keep learning and stay on track in your job. It's a selective smattering of books, journals, links and resources. There are so many wonderful exhibition catalogues, we could only include a few but they are essential for you and everyone in the art centre to look at – for inspiration and planning. Plus industry journals – try to budget for subscriptions.

Remember to always keep looking, listening and learning! There are films, podcasts and so much more.

BOOKS, ARTICLES, LINKS

About art centres

The Art and Craft Centre Story: A survey of thirty-nine Aboriginal community art and craft centres in remote Australia, Desart, 2000
(Ask Desart to supply if the art centre's set of three volumes is missing.)

Australian Art Collector Magazine – Indigenous Art Centres Guide, biannual, 2017 etc.

Painting Culture: The making of an Aboriginal high art, F. Myers, Duke University Press, 2002

Chapter 5, *Burned Out Outback: Art Advisors Working between Two Worlds* – a must-read for all art centre managers!

Books from art centres

Billy Benn, C. Peattie et al, IAD Press, 2011

Hermannsburg Potters: Aranda artists of Central Australia, J. Isaacs & C. Ngala Inkamala, Craftsman House, 2000

Ikuntji: Paintings from Haasts Bluff, 1992–1994, M. Strocchi (comp.) IAD Press, 1995

Keringke: Contemporary Eastern Arrernte art, Keringke Arts, 1999

Painting on Country, K. Stevens, B. Tjalkuri et al, Tjungu Palya, 2017

Painting the Song: Kaltjiti artists of the sand dune country, D. James, McCulloch & McCulloch + Kaltjiti Arts, 2009

Ngaanyatjarra: Art of the Lands, T. Acker and J. Carty (eds), UWA Publishing, 2012

Nganampa kampatjangka unngu – Beneath the canvas: the lives and stories of the Tjala artists, Tjala Arts (ed.), Wakefield Press, 2015

Tjanpi Desert Weavers, P. Watson (ed.), Macmillan, 2012

Warka irititja munu kuwari kutu: work from the past and the present: a celebration of fifty years of Ernabella Arts, L. Partos (ed.), Ernabella Arts, 1998

On Aboriginal art

Aboriginal Art, H. Morphy, Phaidon, 1998

Aboriginal Art, W. Caruana, Thames and Hudson, 2003

Aboriginal art and culture: an American eye, www.aboriginalartandculture.wordpress.com – a wonderful extant blog by the highly regarded Will Owen (dec.).

Across the Desert: Aboriginal batik from Central Australia, J. Ryan et al, NGV, 2008

'Art and Money' by R. Hughes, 1984: www.compilerpress.ca/Competitiveness/Anno%20Hughes%20Art%20&%20Money.htm – great old article!

Art + soul: a journey into the world of Aboriginal art, H. Perkins, Miegunyah Press, 2010 (TV series also)

Bell's Theorem: Aboriginal art – It's a white thing!, R. Bell, 2002: <http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/great/art/bell.html>

Contemporary Aboriginal Art, S. McCulloch, Allen & Unwin, 2001

Desert Mob exhibition catalogues

How Aborigines Invented the Idea of Aboriginal Art: Writings on Aboriginal contemporary art, I. McLean (ed.), Power Institute of Fine Arts, 2009

Over 100 essays, inc.: 'Aboriginal art and the art world', 'Becoming modern', 'Zones of engagement', 'Issues', 'Futures'. A fantastic resource!

One Sun One Moon: Aboriginal art in Australia, H. Perkins and M. West (eds), AGNSW, 2007

The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture, S. Kleinert and M. Neale (eds), Oxford University Press, 2001

Papunya: a place made after the story: the beginnings of the Western Desert painting movement, G. and J. Bardon, Miegunyah Press, 2004

Rattling Spears: A history of Indigenous Australian art, I. McLean, Reaktion Books, 2016

Streets of Papunya: The re-invention of Papunya painting, V. Johnson, NewSouth Publishing, 2015

The Town Grew Up Dancing: The life and times of Wenten Rubuntja, Wenten Rubuntja with J. Green, IAD Press, 2002

Tjunguntja: From having come together, L. Scholes (ed.), MAGNT, 2017
Stunning catalogue to a brilliant exhibition revealing the beginnings of the Western Desert art movement.

On cross-cultural matters

Adapting to Difference: Another Look at Aboriginal-Western Interactions, M.S. Bain, BookPal, 2011.

This is a great little book about how to approach problems in mutual understandings. Highly recommended.

'Blow-ins on the Cold Desert Wind', K. Mahood, *Griffith Review*, No.15, 2007
<https://griffithreview.com/articles/blow-ins-on-the-cold-desert-wind/>
When compliance requirements, endless acronyms, and ineffective meetings are getting you down, read this. It'll help you regain your sense of humour about some of the hard stuff.

'Entering the inter: Power lines in intercultural communication', A. Carrillo Rowe, in *The Handbook of Critical Intercultural Communication*, T.K. Nakayama and R.T. Halualani (eds), J. Wiley & Sons, 2011, 216–26

Health Care and Indigenous Australians: Cultural safety in practice (2nd edn), K. Taylor and P. Guerin, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014

'Kartiya are Like Toyotas: White workers on Australia's cultural frontier', K. Mahood, *Griffith Review*, No. 36, 2012
<https://griffithreview.com/articles/kartiya-are-like-toyotas/>
A must-read account of the inherent contradictions and challenges you might face in your role: authentic, heartbreaking and funny. Read this before you leave home.

Keeping Company – An intercultural conversation, C. Franks and B. Curr, Spencer Gulf Rural Health School: Universities of SA & Adelaide, 2007

Lost Conversations – Finding new ways for black and white Australians to lead together, G. Aigner et al, 2014

http://www.benevolent.org.au/~media/Benevolent/Lost%20Conversations/2014_1120_Lost_Conversations_web_final%20pdf.ashx
As Dr Tom Calma says, '...a very easy and thought-provoking read...'

Remote Area Health Corps (RAHC) Cultural Orientation Handbook, 2009
www.rahc.com.au/sites/default/files/RAHC_Cultural_Orientation_Handbook2013.PDF#overlay-context=health-professionals.pdf

Much of the content in our cultural orientation guide in this book was adapted from the RAHC *Handbook*, which is well worth reading in full.

White Privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack, P. McIntosh, 1990, Ywca.org.
<http://www.ywca.org/atf/cf/%7B6EDE3711-6615-4DDD-B12A-F9E0A781AE81%7D/White%20Privilege%20Unpacking%20the%20Invisible%20Knapsack.pdf>

On Aboriginal culture

Every Hill Got a Story: We grew up in country / men and women of Central Australia and the Central Land Council, M. Bowman (comp.), Hardie Grant, 2015.

Iwenhe Tyerrte: What it means to be an Aboriginal person, M.K. Turner et al, IAD Press
An illuminating and beautiful take on how 'two cultures can hold each other' by a highly regarded Arrernte leader.

Listen Deeply: let these stories in, K. Kemarre Wallace & J. Lovell, IAD Press, 2009

Traditional healers of Central Australia: Ngangkari, NPYWC, Magabala Books, 2013

Yuendumu Everyday: Contemporary life in remote Aboriginal Australia, Y. Musharbash, Aboriginal Studies Press, 2009

On languages

Alice Springs Language Centre: Classes on offer usually include Arrernte and Pitjantjatjara. <http://alicespringslanguagecentre.com/>

Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics: <https://call.batchelor.edu.au/>

First Languages Australia – peak body: <http://www.firstlanguages.org.au/>

IAD Press: <https://iadpress.com/>
Publishes and sells an excellent range of language resources for many of the languages of Central Australia.

Interpreters and translators: Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreter Service (NTAIS) for NT, APY Lands, Ngaanyatjarra Lands: www.nt.gov.au

Junyirri: A framework for planning community language projects, 2015, First Languages Australia <http://www.firstlanguages.org.au/images/Junyirri-2017-web.pdf>

University of South Australia: Offers excellent Pitjantjatjara intensives for beginners every January.

<http://www.unisa.edu.au/Education-Arts-and-Social-Sciences/Communication-International-Studies-and-Languages/Pitjantjatjara-Language-Summer-School/>

Talking posters and books: <http://www.onetalktechnology.com.au/>

On selling and promoting art

How to Buy and Sell Art, M. Reid, Allen & Unwin, 2004.

The art market: various journals and online resources are available, access the Desert library when you are in Alice Springs.

Grants, awards, prizes, residencies: Desert's regular e-blasts. Sign up if they are not landing in your inbox! Also: NAVA's listings (members only) <https://visualarts.net.au/opportunities/> and, for prizes and awards (free): <https://www.art-prizes.com/>

On business

Australian Government's business website: <https://www.business.gov.au>

Rural Communities: Legacy and change, C. and J. Flora, Westview Press, 2007

Using Community Capitals to Build Assets for Positive Community Change. M. S. Emery, S. Fey, C.B. Flora, 2006, www.comm-dev.org

On laws and governance

Arts Law Centre of Australia <https://www.artslaw.com.au/>

Arts Law Centre of Australia – Artists in the Black <http://www.aitb.com.au/>

Australian Indigenous Governance Institute: www.aigi.com – a free multimedia online toolkit with excellent resources on everything from managing staff to dealing with conflict. Use it!

Dream Shield Guidebook, IP Australia, 2011: http://www.iba.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/20131612_IP-Australia_Dream_Shield.pdf

Fair Work: workplace rights and obligations <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/>

Indigenous Cultural Protocols and the Arts, Terri Janke & Company, 2016: <http://www.terrijanke.com.au/indigenous-cultural-protocols-and-arts>

ORIC: www.oric.gov.au – templates for governance activities such as minute-taking at meetings and useful information; also offers governance training and workshops (accredited and non-accredited) developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Personal Property Securities Register: <http://www.ppsr.gov.au> or call: 1300 007 777 or email: enquiries@ppsr.gov.au.

Protocols for Working with Indigenous Artists: www.australiacouncil.gov.au

Safe Work Australia: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/>

Visual Artists and the Law, 3rd edition, A. Clemens, 2015 <https://www.artslaw.com.au/books/book/visual-artists-and-the-law/>

FUNDING SOURCES & INFO

Desart's Strong Business Program for general funding information and leads: programmanager@desart.com.au

Key funding agencies that support art centres include:

- Aboriginals Benefit Account (NT only) – <https://www.pmc.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/grants-and-funding/aboriginal-benefit-account-aba-grant-funding>
- Arts NT – www.arts.nt.gov.au
- Arts SA – www.arts.sa.gov.au
- Australia Council for the Arts – www.australiacouncil.gov.au
- Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) – www.iba.gov.au
- Lotterywest (WA only) – www.lotterywest.wa.gov.au/grants
- WA Department of Culture and the Arts – www.dca.wa.gov.au.

Don't restrict funding searches to the arts. State/Territory governments usually have funding programs for areas such as governance capability, tourism, economic development etc.

Non-government investors in Australia that support Indigenous cultural initiatives include:

- CAL (Copyright Agency Ltd) Cultural Fund <https://www.copyright.com.au/culturalfund/>
- Gordon Darling Foundation (must partner with a public institution) <http://www.gordondarlingfoundation.org.au/>
- The Harold Mitchell Foundation <http://haroldmitchellfoundation.com.au/>

- The Ian Potter Foundation www.ianpotter.org.au
- James & Diana Ramsay Foundation (SA focus) <http://www.jdrfoundation.com.au/>
- The Myer Foundation <http://myerfoundation.org.au/>
- Social Ventures Australia's Diversified Impact Fund <http://www.socialventures.com.au/>
- Tim Fairfax Family Foundation (NT) <http://www.tfff.org.au/>

Creative Partnerships Australia for resources, funding and assistance with philanthropic approaches: <https://www.creativepartnershipsaustralia.org.au/>

Philanthropy Australia for tools and resources: <http://www.philanthropy.org.au/tools-resources/learning/>

The Our Community group has helpful tips and information about most aspects of funding and useful checklists for everything from negotiating funding to contracts. See <https://www.fundingcentre.com.au/>

PEAK INDUSTRY BODIES

- Desart Inc. – Central Australia <http://desart.com.au/>
- Aboriginal Art Centre Hub WA (AACHWA) <http://www.aachwa.com.au/>
- Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (ANKA) <http://ankaaa.org.au/>
- Ananguku Arts – SA <https://www.anangukuarts.com.au/>
- Indigenous Art Centre Alliance (IACA) – Far North Qld and Torres Strait <https://iaca.com.au/>

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HELP!

I NEED SOMEONE, NOT JUST ANYONE!

Important contacts – fill out this list and punch these contacts into your phone.

Desart: (08) 8953 4736

<http://desart.com.au/>

Strong Business Program:

programmanager@desart.com.au

Art Worker Program:

artworker@desart.com.au

SAM Database: sam@desart.com.au

SAM technical support:

support@sam.org.au

IT technical support (for Desart

members): Tim Treloggen 0402 210 957

Counselling service (for Desart

members) – EASA: 1800 193 123

Indigenous Art Code:

CEO – Gabrielle Sullivan: 0438 637 862

gabrielle@indigenousartcode.org

<https://indigenousartcode.org/>

Arts Law Centre of Australia:

(02) 9356 2566 / 1800 221 457

www.artslaw.com.au and

www.aitb.com.au

Copyright Agency:

the visual arts team on 1800 066 844

viscopylicensing@copyright.com.au

<https://www.copyright.com.au/>

Note: Contacts provided are correct at

publication but subject to change.

My nearest art centre buddies:

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Art centre chairperson:

.....

Community office:

.....

Community clinic:

.....

Police:

.....

Well done! You have made it to the end of the guidebook.

Now you know lots more about working in art centres. Kele.

If there is anything we should include in the next edition of this Guidebook, please email admin@desart.com.au

Manage an art centre in Central Australia. It'll change your life!

Central Australia is widely regarded as the birthplace of the contemporary Aboriginal art movement. Artists here continue to transform art and cultural expression, and their art centres are a vital part of community life.

This third edition of the *Desart Art Centre Guidebook* is for managers and coordinators of Aboriginal art centres in Central Australia. It is also for everyone who works – or aspires to work – in an art centre.

Whether you're a highly trained artist with a head for business or a successful business person who is passionate about art, you'll do the job better if you read this guidebook. It includes an overview of Desart's member services and support, and a wealth of practical information and insider tips to guide you in the choices and decisions you're going to be making.

What values are you bringing? How will this job change you? What will your legacy be?

To work at an Aboriginal art centre is a privilege: an opportunity to work with world-famous artists and be part of art history in the making, and to live in an Aboriginal community and learn about Aboriginal culture first hand. It is a prestigious, exciting job. You need to be flexible, resilient, organised and smart. You must be fair and respectful.

Re-read this guidebook as you rise to meet challenges. It will help you to have the most rewarding professional experience of your life!



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Supporting Aboriginal Art Centres
of Central Australia